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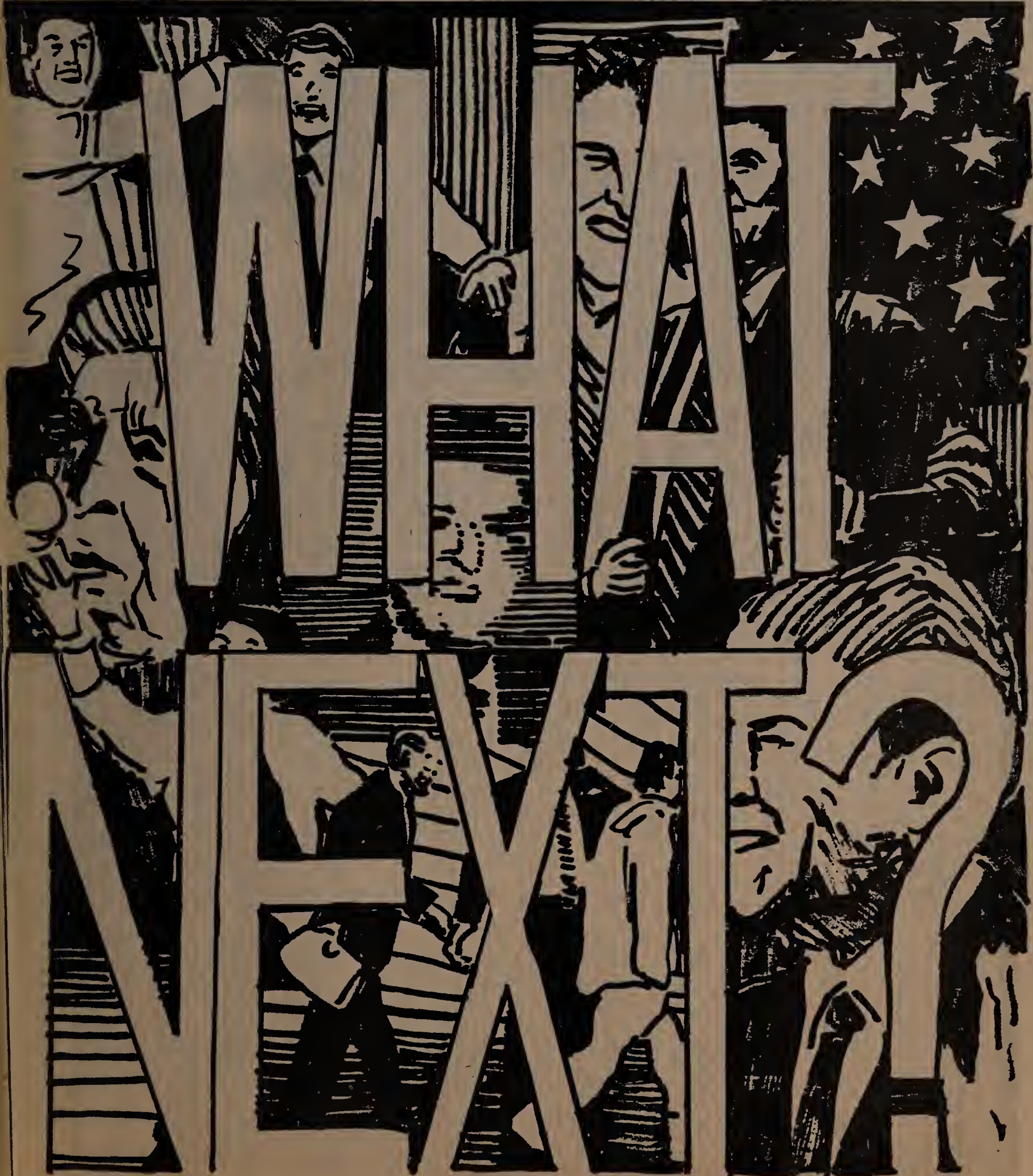
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Where Do We Go From Here? 'A Disaster For The Movement'



By Jil Clark

"A disaster to lesbian and gay rights and the women's movement." That's how Lucia Valeska of the National Gay Task Force (NGTF) described the grim outcome of the national election. In the aftermath, *GCN* interviewed numerous lesbian, gay and feminist political organizers. Most were not surprised by right-wing Republican Ronald Reagan's victory and all but the Reagan supporters were disturbed by the large margin by which his machine vaulted him into the Oval Office. The landslide conservative Republican victory in the Senate, on the other hand, shocked conservative and liberal alike.

Foremost on the minds of progressive lesbians and gays is the blow that will probably be dealt to us in the U.S. Supreme Court, where as many as four judges may be stepping down during Reagan's term — unless they move to resign immediately so that lame-duck President Jimmy Carter can make

the appointments. Viewed from this angle, the cause of human rights may incur more severe damage from Reagan's election than from the conservative coup in the Senate; a Supreme Court appointment is good for the life of the judge, whereas a Senate seat is up for grabs every six years.

"As far as Reagan's promise to appoint a woman to the Supreme Court... well, Phyllis Schlafly is a lawyer," commented Ann Maguire of the Massachusetts Gay Political Caucus.

Many lesbians and gay men fear that the movement's loss of accessibility to the White House will result in the loss of some hard-won influence in Congress and loss of the dialogue which had been initiated with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Within hours of Carter's concession speech, a defeated-sounding Valeska commented only that "the White House project has been going on for several years. We (NGTF) will try to maintain it.

The outlook is not good."

Steve Endean of the Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL) assured *GCN* the fate of the lesbian and gay rights bills now in the Senate and in a House committee is unaffected by the election, since they are not expected to be made into law for years, in any case. All but two of the sponsors of the bills who were up for reelection were returned to Washington — several, such as Jim Weaver of Oregon, having survived vigorous challenges by born-againists.

However, Endean and other lobbyists will have their defense work cut out for them for the next four years or more. "We'll see more anti-gay, McDonald-type amendments in Congress. Unless we can mobilize more effectively, their chances of passing will increase, not decrease," he said.

Understandably, many lesbian and gay progressive leaders assume the conservative victories reflect a general trend toward the

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Where We Lost (And Won) Across The Nation

Compiled by Michael Glover

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Following a campaign filled with talk of choices among lesser evils, voters turned out November 4 and changed the complexion of American politics. In the Senate, liberals toppled, while in the House, most gay rights supporters were re-elected. In state elections an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) went down in Iowa, a lesbian and gay man won seats in the Minnesota legislature, and Floridians added a "right to privacy" to their state constitution.

Senate

In a sweeping move to the right, voters defeated liberal leaders in the U.S. Senate, and replaced

them with new right conservatives. Four of the six senators targeted for defeat by the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) lost their bids for re-election: Birch Bayh of Indiana, Frank Church of Idaho, John Culver of Iowa, and George McGovern of South Dakota. Both Church and McGovern had also received zero ratings from the Christian Voice (CV), another conservative political action group.

McGovern was replaced by James Abdnor, a far-right congressman who consistently voted anti-gay while in the House. Abdnor received a perfect rating from CV.

Surviving the conservative onslaught were Sen. Alan Cranston (D-CA), sponsor of a bill to change immigration laws to allow open lesbians and gay men entrance into the United States, and Thomas Eagleton (D-MO), whose niece recently charged that Eagleton is gay. Both Cranston and Eagleton were marked for defeat by the NCPAC.

In New York, Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman, a co-sponsor of H.R. 2074, the federal lesbian and gay rights bill, lost her bid for the Senate to conservative Republican Alfonse D'Amato.

Senator Paul Laxalt (R-Nevada), sponsor of the anti-gay "Family Protection Act," defeat-

ed Mary Gojack, 58% to 37%.

The second woman ever to be elected to the Senate in her own right, not filling a space vacated by her husband, was Republican Paula Hawkins of Florida. Hawkins, strongly supported by the Moral Majority, another far-right political action group, ran on a platform of opposition to the ERA and abortion.

Republicans gained control of the Senate for the first time since 1954.

"The Senate side was devastating," said Steve Endean, Executive Director of Gay Rights National Lobby (GRNL).

House

In the House of Representatives

only two of the cosponsors of H.R. 2074 were defeated in their bids for re-election. Cosponsor James C. Corman, a Democrat from northwest Los Angeles, lost to Bobbi Fiedler, a leader of Bus Stop, an anti-busing group, while Rep. Robert Carr (D-MI), lost his bid by less than a thousand votes.

Cosponsors re-elected in close battles included Jim Weaver (D-OR), Mike Barnes (D-MD), Patricia Schroeder (D-CO), Bill Green (R-NY), Bob Edgar (D-PA) and John Burton (D-CA).

Also in California, Carey Peck, son of Gregory Peck, failed in his bid to unseat Rep. Robert Dornan, a leading spokesperson for

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Frightened By What Lies Ahead? You Should Be

By Eric E. Rofes

In his election night victory statement, President-elect Ronald Reagan said, "I am not frightened by what lies ahead, and I don't believe the American people are frightened by what lies ahead."

If the names Steve Symms, Dan Quayle, Chuck Grassley, Al D'Amato, James Abdnor, Bob Kasten, Don Nickles, Mark

News Analysis

Andrews and Jeremiah Denton don't frighten you now, they should. They are among the New Right senators-elect who wiped out the likes of Frank Church, Birch Bayh, John Culver, Jacob Javits, George McGovern, Gaylord Nelson, and Warren Magnuson — all strong liberal incumbents — from the U.S. Senate.

Together with New Right Congressmembers-elect like John Hiler (who defeated House Majority Whip John Brademas of Indiana), Denny Smith, and Frank Wolf (who defeated moderate Joel Fisher, one of the few Virginia Congressmembers who had supported lesbian and gay rights), it appears the "Moral Majority" has defeated most of the liberal members of Congress it had targeted this year.

And these new conservative leaders were elected with much

help from the Christian action groups — and you can bet they'll be accountable to the fundamentalists. Combine this with a Reagan victory, and you shouldn't be frightened, you should be getting your suitcase packed and heading for the next plane out.

In analyzing the election, too many political writers have credited the conservative sweep to the current economic crisis and ignored the role that social issues played in bringing the Right into power. In fact, Iris Mitgang, chair of the National Women's Political Caucus, told the press, "Women's issues did not turn out to be as crucial an element in the overall campaign because of other pressing issues of the economy and foreign affairs."

If Mitgang is attempting to imply that large numbers of voters voted for Reagan and conservative candidates because of the inflation rate and ignored issues like abortion rights, Equal Rights Amendment, and lesbian and gay rights, she's making an error of convenience. People who voted knew what and whom they were voting for, and Mitgang's comments only serve to distract us from the difficult realization that liberal and progressive strategy in this election failed us miserably, and we'll all be paying for our mistakes over the next decade.

The failure of liberals and

progressives to support Jimmy Carter strongly and early enough to make a difference cost Carter the election. But Carter's a difficult man to get excited about and his defeat brings home the same message that Gov. Michael Dukakis' defeat two years ago brought home in Massachusetts: if a candidate expects to marshal support from women, people of color, lesbians and gay men, s/he has got to come across on the issues that concern us. Carter's failure to be an active force in getting the ERA passed, his opposition to abortion rights, his failure to take strong stands in support of gay people, and his broken promises to Blacks, Hispanics, and poor people cost him the liberal support he counted on.

While liberals studied their candidates, picking and choosing who was good enough to support, conservatives jumped right in behind a presidential candidate, dozens of Senators and Congresspersons, and put their money and machinery to work. By the time liberals woke up to the fact that targeted Senators like Bayh and McGovern were in trouble, it was too late: the money and the enthusiasm just weren't there. Republican energy was strong and focused; Democratic energy was uneven and diffuse. And the Republicans rang up victory after victory.

As lesbians and gay men, what can we expect from national politics over the next four years? Bills like the McDonald Amendment and the "Family Protection Act," sponsored by conservative Nevada Sen. Paul Laxalt (who served as chair of Reagan's campaign), will come down the pike and have a good chance of passing through the Republican-controlled committees. While Reagan took no position on his buddy's bill, Laxalt's gain in stature among his fellow senators may be enough to get this piece of anti-gay legislation to the president's desk.

Without Birch Bayh's committee leadership, a human life amendment banning abortion may become a frightening reality. With a party platform opposing the ERA, how much help will a Republican president and Republican-controlled Senate and House give to the amendment? And gay people can count on the Justice Department to step up harassment of people of our ilk, as occurred after the Nixon victory.

Which is all to say that we must get ready for hard times ahead. With the Right rolling in money, things may get worse before they get better. As gay people we should prepare to take care of ourselves as the attacks come down.

But more than that, mobilization must begin to occur among

gay people, women, people of color, and all progressive-minded people that will build organizations and political action funds capable of matching the Right's. With Christian Voice and Moral Majority able to attract votes and money as never before, the creation of an anti-right coalition must happen fast.

What this means for you and me is that we have got to become more politically active. The luxury of sitting out the vote, avoiding "liberal" organizations, and picking and choosing is over. Those who claim that mainstream politics doesn't affect their lives will learn otherwise over the next few years. We've got to come across, by joining organizations like the Gay Right National Lobby and the National Organization for Women, by putting our money firmly behind candidates we can support, and by participating in a process many of us find appalling.

Most of all, we've got to watch the Right carefully, very carefully. A force of conservatives like we've just elected has never before been in power when gay people were openly fighting for rights. Attacks may be brutal and alarming. We have got to keep our eyes open and we have got to be strongly organized to fight back. Running scared, we'll be washed away by the Right. Fighting united, we've got a chance.

News Notes

quote of the week

"There is abroad in the country a very unpleasant spirit. Tonight is the time to pledge that we will work harder to try to combat it. We can't allow this wholly negative strain which has taken root in American politics to succeed."

— Barney Frank, a strong lesbian and gay rights supporter who was one of the only liberals elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, wearily decrying the tide of conservatism which swept the elections November 4. Quoted in the Boston *Globe*, November 5, 1980.

making ends meet

TULSA, OK — Anti-gay crusader Anita Bryant, who divorced her husband of 20 years during the summer, said in an interview with the Tulsa *World* that her biggest concern is making ends meet.

The Washington *Post* reports that the "pro-family" activist, whose stand against a lesbian and gay rights law in Dade County, Fla., in 1977 drew national attention, moved to an affluent suburb here last summer after she announced plans to divorce Bob Green. Bryant attributed the failure of their marriage to the pressures of being a professional singer, a wife, and a mother.

Her divorce petition of last May said that her husband had tried to use Anita Bryant Ministries, whose stated purpose was to "preserve the American family" by "reforming" homosexuals, to advance the staff's own personal careers. She has custody of a 16-year-old daughter and 11-year-old twins; her 17-year-old son lives in Florida with Green.

"Literally, I'm working to keep a roof over our heads and food on the table," Bryant told the *World* reporter, who noted that she was wearing a new dress designed by Courreges.

surprise

EVANSTON, IL — In a move taken without the participation of local lesbian and gay rights organizations, the city council of this Chicago suburb has passed an ordinance forbidding discrimination in city hiring on the basis of sexual preference.

Chicago's *GayLife* reports that the discrimination clause is part of a comprehensive city personnel code introduced July 7 and passed August 18 by the council. It received mayoral approval August 24 and is now effective.

The ordinance lists sexual preference along with religion, race, color, and national origin as a prohibited ground for discrimination in city "recruitment, examination, appointment, promotion, retention, or any other personnel action," with a list of exceptions which *GayLife* calls "normal in civil service regulations with regard to any form of discrimination."

Schoolteachers are not covered by the ordinance, since they are Board of Education employees and not city employees. Private employment is also not covered.

Contacted by *GayLife*, a spokesperson for the Northwestern University Gay Union and Lesbian Alliance, based in Evanston, was unaware of the ordinance and its adoption. The Illinois Gay Rights Task Force was also unfamiliar with the ordinance.

GayLife learned of the ordinance through a tip from an Evanston city job applicant to *Gay Chicago* magazine. A reporter for *Gay Chicago* then asked *GayLife* about the matter.

lesbian cultural center project

BOSTON — Over 50 women gathered at the Harriet Tubman House on Sunday, Nov. 2 to begin work on the Lesbian Cultural Center Project. The idea grew out of a community feedback meeting which was held at the end of GALAS (The Great American Lesbian Art Show). At that time, the need for a lesbian owned/controlled space was identified, and some women from GALAS took responsibility for setting up a meeting to discuss such a project.

At the meeting held Sunday, several issues were brought up, such as buying vs. renting a space, the types of activities, and equipment it would accommodate, accessibility both in terms of who would use the facility as a working/learning center and who could participate in events.

Some women talked of the need for a multi-cultural center and discussed ways of insuring the participation of minority women. Several participants discussed the need for an alcohol free space.

At the present time, women are needed in all aspects of the planning of such a center. Notices announcing the next meeting will be circulated throughout the community and will also appear in the calendar section of *GCN*.

For more information, call (617) 288-3106.

sexual harassment in providence

PROVIDENCE, RI — Regulations recently adopted by this city's Human Relations Commission which are intended to protect students and employees from sexual harassment include provisions protecting against harassment on the basis of sexual preference.

The Providence *Evening Bulletin* reports that commission rules define sexual harassment as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which "interferes with or is intended to interfere with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment and when employees of the opposite sex or opposite sexual preference are not similarly treated."

The regulations stipulate that schools and companies have a duty to establish strong policies against such harassment and to discuss those policies openly.

The rules warn that an educational institution or employer may be held liable if it "condones, acquiesces in, ignores or fails to rectify" the practice of sexual harassment, said Ray Rickman, the panel's executive director.

Conduct is also regarded as sexual harassment if submission to such conduct is made or reasonably appears to be a term or condition of employment, or if submission to or rejection of such conduct is the basis for decisions that affect the terms and conditions of an individual's employment.

(lesbian and) gay press convention

NEW YORK — Joe DiSabato, of Rivendell Marketing Company, an advertising agency which supplies ads to gay newspapers, is planning a Gay Press Convention to be held at the Roosevelt Hotel here January 8-11, 1981.

According to DiSabato, "an association will be formed at this convention to work toward common goals and on common problems of the gay press." The convention will be open to anyone who works in any capacity on any gay publication in the country; invitations are also being extended to "some of the larger overseas gay publications," DiSabato says. Freelance writers are also welcome.

Discussions planned for the conference include editorial, advertising, and distribution concerns. "Many experts from outside the gay press will be involved," according to DiSabato.

The registration fee is \$75 before November 15 and \$100 after that date, per person. Hotel accommodations cost extra; DiSabato is urging that participants stay at the Roosevelt, which charges \$50 per night for a single room and \$60 for a double or twin, plus occupancy rates and sales tax. DiSabato says that no discounts on registration fee will be available for papers or writers who cannot afford the fees.

For information and reservation forms, contact DiSabato and Rivendell Marketing Company, 666 Sixth Avenue, New York, NY 10010, (212) 242-6863.

teachers support rights

BOSTON — The Legislative Committee of the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) voted on October 30 to include in its 1981 legislative program a proposal to co-sponsor a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual preference in employment, housing, insurance, public accommodations, and a number of other areas.

The bill, numbered H3882 last year, has been introduced in the Massachusetts legislature in several past sessions along with a more specific measure prohibiting discrimination against lesbians and gay men in civil service employment.

Richard J. Durkin, Director of Governmental Services for the MTA, told *GCN* the proposal for sponsorship will be brought before the 57-member Board of Directors of the MTA at a meeting on December 6. It will be one of 25 to 35 such proposals making up the Legislative Committee program.

Durkin said the Board usually passes from three to six of the proposals presented to it by the Committee. He declined to speculate on the chances for passage of the proposed sponsorship of the lesbian and gay bill.

the landlord's fault

FREEHOLD, NJ — A woman who was raped in her apartment has accepted a settlement of \$150,000 from her landlord, after accusing him in a suit of refusing to fix a lock on the window used by her rapist, the New York *Times* reports.

The defendants in the suit, filed in Superior Court, were S. Alexander Eichler, of the Bernsol Realty Company, and Charles McCann, acting superintendent of the apartment complex in Long Branch, NJ, where the woman was raped in 1978.

The victim said she had asked McCann twice to fix the lock before she was raped. The rapist was arrested and confessed.

first mexican conference

MEXICO CITY — The Frente Homosexual de Accion Revolucionaria (FHAR — Homosexual Revolutionary Action Group) has planned a national conference of FHAR members and supporters for December 13 and 14 at a Mexico City location yet to be determined.

FHAR has announced that the purpose of the conference, the first of its kind, will be "to make a self-critical appraisal of activities undertaken so far, to revise the organizational structure at a national level, to formulate a political declaration and to make decisions concerning the direction of our future work."

FHAR was organized in 1978 by one-time members of the now-defunct Frente de Liberacion Homosexual (Homosexual Liberation Front), the first lesbian and gay organization in Mexico. FHAR is one of at least three lesbian and gay groups currently active in the country.

Although FHAR is centered in Mexico City, one object of the conference will be to promote lesbian and gay organizing in outlying regions of the country. "The active participation of lesbians and gay men from the provinces," a FHAR statement reads, "will permit the creation of a powerful national organization that can confront directly the arbitrary actions taken against us everywhere solely because we are homosexual. A FHAR with branches in all the states can respond more effectively to any eventuality."

Conference organizers have planned workshops on Concepts and Myths of Homosexuality; Language; Lesbians; Homosexuals and the Law; Class Structure Within the Gay Community and Outside It; Solidarity and Links with Related Organizations; Transvestism and Transsexuality; The Family; and Homosexuals in the Productive Process (jobs).

For more information write: F.H.A.R., Apartado Postal 13-320, Mexico 13, D.F. Mexico.

police dirty tricks end

DETROIT, MI — After a six-year lawsuit, the Michigan State Police will release the "subversive" files they illegally maintained on over 38,000 people and 400 organizations.

The National Lawyers' Guild (NLG) reports that the final agreement which mandates the police to notify all their surveillance victims was signed recently. Free copies of the files will be available to all those persons upon whom files were maintained.

"The release of tens of thousands of files makes the extensiveness of state police spying terrifyingly clear," said Richard Soble, president of the NLG and an attorney in the case. "I'm afraid to speculate on how many people have been turned down or forced out of jobs or housing during the last thirty years because irrelevant and often inaccurate information was placed in their files," he added.

The lawsuit was started five and a half years ago by Walter Benkert, president of the Michigan Association for Consumer Protection, which was a target of political surveillance. He was joined by antiwar, welfare rights, and other political activists.

As a result of the Benkert suit, what the NLG calls "an enormous amount of state police illegal activities" were uncovered. According to the organization, files were located on judges, elected officials, workers, union officials and other political activists; petitions of third party groups asking to be placed on the ballot were found in the files; and names of people who attended liberal concerts and lectures were placed on file.

"Yet after millions of tax dollars and years of surveillance and harassment, not one arrest was made on evidence gained through the police surveillance crews, experts say," the NLG release states.

The organization has begun a Political Surveillance Project to aid those persons who were spied upon. The project may be contacted through the Detroit chapter of the NLG, 1035 St. Antoine, Detroit, MI 48226, (313) 963-0843.

ronald comes out

HOUSTON — Bob Brandon, an openly gay actor who once played Ronald McDonald in TV commercials for the fast food chain, has been ordered by a Florida district court to never again wear Ronald McDonald "drag" or to say or imply that Ronald McDonald is gay.

Because We Care, the newsletter of Integrity/Houston, reports that the court order was a result of the McDonald Corporation's suit charging that Brandon's coming out would lead to the public's belief that their trademark was gay.

Brandon said that he came out to show that gay people can and do interact with children without "perverting their morals."

Our considered opinion," added *Because We Care*, "is that the content of McDonald's 'food' is a lot more cause for public concern rather than Ronald McDonald's sexual orientation."

Va. Beach Votes To Ban Our Own from Libraries

Compiled by Michael Glover

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA — "We're not about to let a bunch of queers run our town," Rev. Rodney Bell told *GCN* the day after voters here called for banning from Virginia Beach public libraries publications which "depict or advocate homosexual acts."

Final returns showed 13,694 voting yes, 48,217 voting no and 16,935 voters not responding to the non-binding question which asked, "Shall a publication whose primary purpose is to depict or advocate, through picture or word, homosexual acts, be displayed, distributed, or received into the libraries of Virginia Beach?"

Designed by Bell's "Citizens for the Family" to settle the question of inclusion and distribution of a local lesbian/gay newspaper, *Our Own*, in the public libraries here, the referendum sparked as much controversy as it settled.

"The referendum has nothing whatsoever to do with *Our Own*," editor Gary Hankins told *GCN*. "No issue of the paper has ever had the primary purpose of advocating or depicting homosexual acts."

Bell, pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, countered: "The people have spoken with a strong voice to city council, and I have called on the city council to act in accordance with the vote of the people. I feel that the city council will act responsibly in this."

Asked by *GCN* what his group would do if city council failed to act, Bell replied, "We'll have to get us another city council."

Virginia Beach Mayor Henry

McCoy agreed that council action was likely, telling *GCN*, "The city council will certainly have to take cognizance of the voters' will. I imagine it will come up in council before the end of this month."

Before the election, McCoy had said that if voters called for a ban on such homosexual publications, then city council should pass an ordinance pulling *Our Own* out of the libraries, even though he was sure such an ordinance would be thrown out by the courts.

Virginia Beach gay activist Jim Early confirmed that legal action was a clear possibility, telling *GCN*, "If city council does pull *Our Own* out of the libraries, I think the only place for dealing with anything city council does is in the courts."

In September, the Norfolk, Va. Unitarian-Universalist Gay Community, publisher of *Our Own*, filed suit against the city of Virginia Beach in an attempt to regain open display and distribution rights for the newspaper in Virginia Beach libraries. (see *GCN*, Vol. 8, No. 11).

"When we filed suit in September," Early pointed out, "the ACLU told us that if city council acted on the referendum, the ACLU would support us in a second suit."

Reacting to the vote on the referendum, Virginia Beach Library Board Chair Jack Robertson told *GCN*, "I'm disappointed with the results. But our attack was to try and get people not to vote on this question, so if you combine yes votes with abstentions, it runs about 60% in favor of pulling it [*Our Own*] and 40% for leaving it

alone."

Robertson and the Friends of the Library, a local library support group, ran full-page ads in the *Virginia Beach Beacon* urging people not to vote at all on the library referendum.

Robertson explained that they saw voting yes as mandating pornography in the libraries, which was no good, while a no vote meant the voter was in favor of political interference in the library; thus the only choice, according to Robertson, was to abstain from voting on the question.

Jim Early, previous editor of *Our Own*, said the results showed the weakness of that tactic. "They would have been much better advised to side with the gay groups and the gay publications and vote yes on that referendum."

"Their stance of 'neutrality' is inefficient and self-defeating," Early continued. "It caves in to the fundamentalist thinking. It's capitulation in a different guise."

"In the future our liberal friends had better get off their asses and hustle for their interests as well as ours."

"I think it's dangerous for them to be aloof on a question like this because it's homosexuality and expect that their interests will survive," Early stated.

Despite the referendum, Library Board Chair Robertson, a Virginia Beach realtor, told *GCN*, "We still think people have a right to read it [*Our Own*]. The majority is going to find out that they have trampled on the minority rights, and when you do that, you get your feet dirty."

District Elections Lose Again in San Francisco

By John Kyper

SAN FRANCISCO — In what must have been one of the most contradictory and confusing elections ever held, voters here narrowly rejected a ballot proposition that would have negated at-large elections for the city's board of supervisors being conducted on the same ballot.

The measure would have continued the terms of the 11 incumbent district supervisors whose terms had been cut short by a special election held in August (see *GCN*, Vol. 8, No. 7).

Ironically, all but three of the incumbents were retained, including several progressive voices that conservatives had hoped to defeat.

Openly gay supervisor Harry Britt was reelected by a comfortable margin, as were Nancy Walker, Carol Ruth Silver, and Doris Ward. The two black supervisors held onto their seats, and the number of women was increased from five to six.

Two of those elected most handily, Silver from the Mission and Ella Hillhutch from the Western Addition, had been perceived as vulnerable when they would have had to run for reelection in their district next year.

Former sheriff Richard Hongisto, who returned from a corrections job in New York to run for the board, was elected, as were former supervisor Lee Dolson and Wendy Nelder, daughter of a former supervisor and police chief.

Asians and Latinos were unsuccessful in obtaining representation on the board.

Also disappointed was David Scott, who had hoped to become the second openly gay supervisor.

Although Scott received more votes than he did when he ran for mayor last year, he placed 19th, two places in front of gay conservative Kevin Wadsworth.

Other gay candidates included marijuana merchant Dennis Peron, activist Paul Boneberg, and *Voice* publisher Paul Hardman.

Sixty-five candidates vied for the 11 positions. Many were veterans of last year's races.

Besides Peron and Wadsworth, two other candidates who had challenged Harry Britt in District Five were running again, including Marjorie Martin, token homophobe in last year's race. Gay labor activist Howard Wallace quipped that strangers kept asking him why he wasn't running against him, so they could vote against him.

Labor attorney Terrence Hallinan was initially declared a winner; however, he was edged out of eleventh place by Wendy Nelder by 300 votes after the last returns were counted.

Hallinan had been Britt's principal opponent in 1979, when he was accused of running an anti-gay campaign. As a result, he lost votes of many lesbian and gay leftists who might otherwise have been inclined to support him.

Proposition N was the ballot measure to restore district elections; the initiative measure was launched the night of the August defeat. It collected 40,000 signatures in 12 days, the most overwhelming response to an initiative petition in the city's history. Opponents, including Dolson, sued to prevent its being placed on the ballot. After their suit was thrown out of court, they vowed to sue to prevent the implementation of N

were it to pass, leaving the city with two rival Boards of Supervisors.

The bizarre electoral situation led to a divergence in strategies by those supporting district elections. Some groups, such as the Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club, voted to endorse only incumbent supervisors, arguing that supporters of non-incumbents, however progressive, might be inclined to vote against N in hopes that their candidates would be elected.

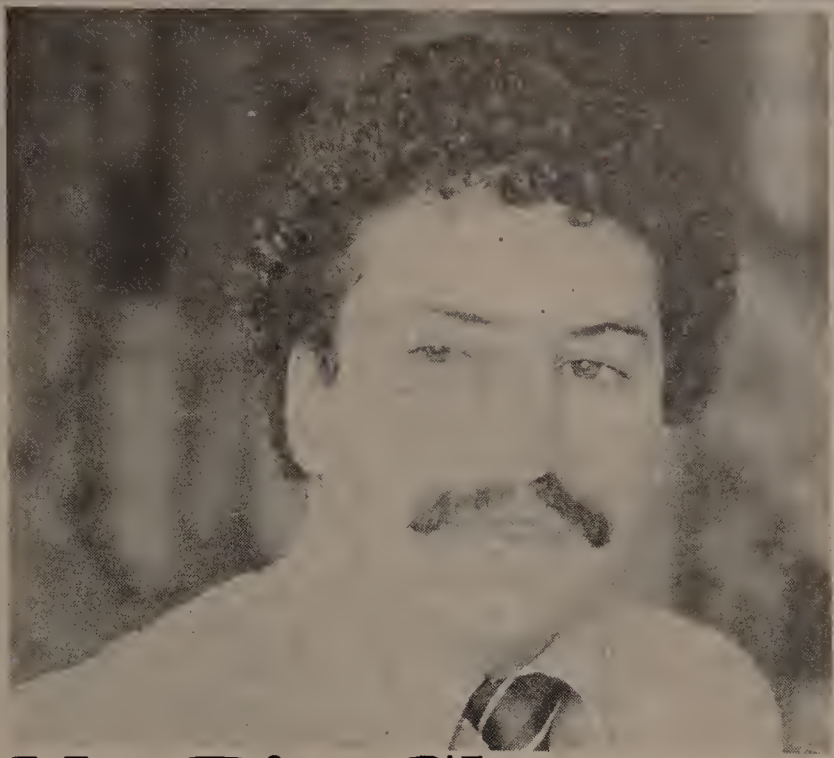
Others, such as the Alice B. Toklas and the Stonewall Gay Democratic Clubs, endorsed progressive non-incumbents as insurance against N's defeat.

Candidates Scott and Hongisto stood to gain politically from good showings, even if N were to pass and their elections nullified.

N was probably hurt by the television projections of a Reagan landslide and by President Carter's concession an hour and a quarter before the polls closed on the West Coast. As a result, the unusual evening rush of voters failed to materialize, harming many other candidates as well. There was widespread resentment in California against the President and the networks.

Lesbian and gay candidates figured in a few other local races. Tim Wolfred, a former legislative aid to Harry Britt, was elected to the Community College Board. Interestingly, one of the local papers' endorsement of him made no mention of his homosexuality.

Teacher-activist Tom Ammannio conducted an active campaign for the Board of Education, particularly in the lesbian and gay community, but he ran sixth in a field of 15 vying for four positions.



No Big Changes In Mass. Races

By David Morris

BOSTON — Despite nationwide gains for conservatives in November 4's election, it seems that there will be no significant philosophical change in the Massachusetts legislature or in Massachusetts representation to the federal government.

In the 12-member Massachusetts delegation to the US House of Representatives, only one new face will appear, that of Democrat Barney Frank, who previously represented Boston's Eighth Suffolk District in the Massachusetts House. Frank, a strong advocate of lesbian and gay rights, replaces Robert Drinan, also a supporter of lesbian and gay rights.

Frank was attacked during both the primary and general campaigns for his pro-choice and pro-lesbian and gay stands (see *GCN*, Vol. 8, No. 9).

James Segal, Frank's campaign manager, told *GCN* those attacks were effective in that they reduced Frank's margin of victory.

Segal added that the defeat of many House liberals will add to Frank's responsibility. "He will have more of a role to play now that so many Democrats have lost," he told *GCN*.

When asked if there were still reasons for optimism despite widespread conservative victories, Segal commented, "Probably, but I haven't thought of any yet."

Frank was not available to the media for comment.

In the tenth district, incumbent Margaret Heckler of Wellesley, a Republican, defeated liberal Democrat Robert McCarthy, despite active support for McCarthy from Massachusetts Sen. Edward Kennedy, former governor Michael Dukakis, Lieutenant Governor Thomas P. O'Neill and former senator Muriel Humphrey of Minnesota. McCarthy had been endorsed by the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus (MWPC) and the liberal Citizens for Participation in Political Action (CPPAX).

Heckler, a founder of the MWPC, supports the platform of the Republican Party, which has no ERA plank. She opposes federally funded abortions.

In the first district, another MWPC endorsee and supporter of lesbian and gay rights, Democrat Helen Poppy Doyle, failed to unseat incumbent Republican Silvio Conte, who voted against the anti-gay McDonald amendment (see *GCN*, Vol. 8, No. 5) but nevertheless received a low 29 per cent rating from the National Women's Political Caucus.

Incumbent James Shannon of the fifth district, a liberal Democrat who voted against the McDonald amendment and supports women's rights to abortion, survived the threat posed by an anti-choice letter written by Boston's Humberto Cardinal Medeiros shortly before the primary election (see *GCN*, Vol. 8, No. 5).

continued on page 11

Judge Upholds Gish's Firing

Compiled by Betty Krier

PARAMUS, NJ — New Jersey State Education Commissioner Fred G. Burke has affirmed the decision of an administrative law judge to dismiss tenured teacher John Gish as a result of his participation in lesbian and gay rights activities.

Echoing the earlier decision, Burke wrote in his October 31 ruling, "No judgment has been made to respondent's personal behavior, only the determination that his endorsement, with attendant publicity, of a 'gay life-style' had an impact upon his fitness to teach."

This action began in 1972 when Gish, a Paramus High School teacher, assumed the presidency of the Gay Activist Alliance. At the time, the school superintendent warned him not to take such a public stance. Gish did not step down, and the Paramus school board moved to have him transferred out of the school and into administrative work. After a

hearing before him in 1978, administrative law judge Eric C. Erickson ruled in support of the board's action.

Vincent Perna of the New Jersey Education Association (NJEA) labelled Burke's decision "horrendous." He told *GCN*, "John has civil rights like everyone else to take part in political demonstrations or demonstrations for certain beliefs — and he should not be fired for it. The way the decision is written, teachers cannot enjoy the same First Amendment rights as everyone else. They must stay in the closet — gay or any other kind of closet."

Erickson's ruling confronted the issue in part, stating, "Respondent as a citizen has an unfettered right to seek and generate all the publicity for which he was responsible. . . . Such expression is guaranteed by the United States Constitution." He continued, "This is not to say, however, that

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Gay Community News

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Community Voices

discrimination exists

Dear GCN:

I recently lost my job with a national nonprofit health agency when they learned that I am gay. Prior to their "revelation" of my sexual preference I was considered to be a young man with a "promising career" with the organization, all reviews of my work was top notch, and my opinions on programming and fundraising matters were sought after by my peers.

Now, I am not only out of a job, but the agency I worked for is refusing to give me a letter of recommendation, are holding up my final pay, and answering inquiries about me with the stance that they have no knowledge of my "leaving without notice." Two months ago I would never have believed that this sort of thing could happen in this day and age. In fact, my family, friends, and I are still somewhat in a state of shock.

I guess I am writing to just let GCN readers know that this sort of prejudice and discrimination does exist and is still happening in every day life. The effects that this situation has had on my career, my life, and the lives of those people around me will be long and far reaching.

I'd also like to thank the GCN for many of the articles they have printed regarding prejudice because of sexual preference during the past few weeks. If nothing else, these stories are a constant reminder to me that I am not alone in this sort of situation.

Sincerely,
Michael J. Zysk
Framingham, MA

spiritual poison

Dear GCN

It is not my policy to write letters to someone who reacts negatively to what I say or write concerning my personal gay experience as a priest. However, as a christian and even more so *as a priest*, I feel the letter by Charles Stone (GCN, Vol. 8, No. 16), written in reaction to the article I co-authored, "Life in Glass Houses: A Biography of a Gay Priest," (GCN, Vol. 8, No. 13), warrants, in turn, a response from me.

I will not comment on how Mr. Stone might feel about the article, itself — each person is entitled to his/her own opinion — but I am responding to the obviously disgruntled Mr. Stone, who feels he can righteously hurl insults at God, Himself, by calling Jesus Christ "that idiotic nazarene." Mr. Stone, you will not insult the good Lord so easily and get away with it, as far as I'm concerned. My response to you follows:

For any of you who may have suffered through food poisoning, you know all too well the horrible symptoms and bodily reactions — extreme nausea and continuous and simultaneous vomiting and defecating. You are emitting the contaminated foodstuffs from your body as fast as you can. Mr. Stone's tirade against Jesus Christ and all christians is poisonous and "dis-eased," indeed! The emotional and verbal garbage which he, as a so-called anti-Christ, spews forth ought to be quickly defecated and vomited out by anyone who comes into contact with it, lest his "dis-ease" contaminate and infect the essential goodness of the human spirit.

No one wants to get food poisoning; no one wants his/her "human-ness" and desire for "transcendence" poisoned, either. Therefore, such garbage as Mr. Stone's should be "religiously" avoided by any intelligent person.

I pray that each christian will continue to strive for "wholeness" by following faithfully in his/her life-style the health plan initiated and formulated by the Divine Healer, Himself, Jesus Christ.

Mr. Stone, when you insult God, you insult at the same time His countless and loyal friends. Maybe you should THINK, before you *try to "play"* anti Christ, so that *you* won't sound "idiotic"! Peace to all,
Fr. Michael De Petrillo
Boston, MA

During this past week GCN subscribers have been receiving letters from our Board of Directors asking for donations so the staff can be provided with health insurance. Right now, staff members take home \$81.77/week after taxes. For us, getting sick or injured can become a financial as well as a physical catastrophe. We hope you will think about what *Gay Community News* means to you and give what you can so that a secure and healthy staff can continue to publish your newspaper.

liberation's tombstone

Dear Editor,

To someone outside the Greenwich Village community it may have "appeared at times" that "opponents of the sculpture, both gay and straight, had the upper hand" ("Community Board Approves Christopher Park Statue," see GCN Vol. 8, No. 15). Indeed there has probably never been such unanimous community opposition to anything in the history of Greenwich Village; every block association including such diverse groups as the Friends of Christopher Park, the Gay Activists Alliance and the Village Homeowners Association. All of these groups are well represented by resident gays and lesbians. A petition circulated in the local gay bars called the statue "grotesque stereotypes" and a gay group called "Gays Against the Statue" was formed. Indeed the only proponents (with a few exceptions noted in your article) came from gays outside our community! And from the local political club called the "Village Independent Democrats" (VID) who are largely controlled by a gay militant fringe. The VID effectively controls the membership and votes of Community Board #. (Andrew Stein and local council-members — prominent VIDers — appoint the Board member).

Interestingly, your reporter calls the statues "peaceful." Mr. Shehadi also describes the statues as "white gay couples." Indeed they are white — but so are their clothes, hair, shoes, etc. This is the artist's style — the racist charge in an isolated context is a red herring issue raised by only a few opponents.

The spokesperson for the GAA was not Michael Rezak — but Michael Ritzer.

The reference to the "cruising clones" was made by a gay activist — not "heterosexuals." Indeed this description is a more apt title for the statues and will indicate the source of gay opposition. The statues are sexually postured — "cruising" — and highlighting public sex as the central theme of gay liberation is highly offensive and denegrating to the gay community. We do not wish to be viewed as "sex objects." The word "clones" refers to the stereotypical orientation of the statues. Indeed, not only are blacks not represented, but neither are old people, "queens," short people, ugly people, etc. The male couple are macho and look like the contemporary counter-stereotype commonly seen on Christopher Street. This current stereotype is hurting the gay movement — just as the "sissy" image discouraged gays from coming out.

As gay residents we are concerned that these statues will invite more queer-bashers to the Village to see the "fag statue." In this respect we hardly agree that the statues are "peaceful."

The drag queens who led the Stonewall Inn riots promise the statues will be exploded to liberate gay people. In the words of Jon-Jon: "The people who killed gay liberation are now erecting its tombstone." We won't let that happen.

Sincerely,
Robert Rygor
New York, NY

wide support

Dear Editors:

The reports about the Segal sculpture have consistently exaggerated the size of gay opposition to the sculpture. I went to the various meetings of Community Board Two and saw both sides. Yes, Craig Rodwell and Robert Rygor did line up a small group of vocal opponents to the sculpture. The overwhelming majority of gay activists present at the meetings were outspoken in their support for the sculpture. These sculpture supporters represented many key gay community leaders in New York as well as many other lesbian and gay men including black women and men, as well.

As a gay resident of Greenwich Village, it's clear to me that there is the widest support for Segal's sculpture in the gay community here.

Sincerely,
Allen N. Roskoff
New York, NY

mutilated monuments

Dear GCN

I hope the Christopher Park Statue will not be defaced or mutilated by vandals who will see it as a monument to homosexuality. The Rodin sculpture on Oscar Wilde's Paris grave in the Pere la Chaise cemetery was thus defaced.

M. King
Boston, MA

liberal cheek

Dear Editor,

In a recent issue, a "Prisoners' Page" included a small, boxed item which urged persons corresponding with prisoners not to send them any money in the mail lest the GCN Prison Columns become known as an easy source of income for prisoners, or words to that effect.

I wonder if whoever put that tasteless bit of liberal cheek in our paper actually got a consensus on this issue from GCN staff. Or, if that person has ever been in prison and knows what it's like to have to literally sell your ass for a few packs of cigarettes or any other small luxuries that make prison life somehow bearable. I would think if one is corresponding with a prisoner and has a reasonably good rapport with that person as well as a good feeling about them, why not send a few bucks their way? The idea that such practice would bring about a deluge of greedy prisoners clamoring for OUR DOLLARS is not only absurd, but is offensive and oppressive to a class of persons whom we are purporting to be supportive of and understanding toward! Shame on your puritanical ethics and general tight-assedness! There are some folks in this revolution who can't always pay their own way, you know!

In struggle and revolt,
Juanna Connolly
Freddie Greenfield
San Francisco, CA

transferred again

Dear Editor,

I March of 1979 I was subjected to an involuntary out-of-state transfer from the Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla to the federal prison in Marion, Illinois. According to a statement made to the media by Warden Spaulding, I was transferred for being a negative leadership influence on the population. In actual fact, however, I was removed for being an outspoken critic of unjust administrative policies, which took the form of articles in the alternative press and litigation in the courts. I had been in the hole for nearly a year prior to the move and thus my contact with the population and influence over them, either positive or negative, was nonexistent. Had the administration given me a pre-transfer hearing, as the law requires, they could not have justified their reasons for moving me.

Shortly after my arrival at Marion I filed a petition for a writ of *habeas corpus* in the local federal court. The suit was to test the legality of my out-of-state transfer. Just before the petition came on for hearing, however, I was shipped to the U.S. Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, where I was held in conditions amounting to incommunicado detention. Notwithstanding the denial of law books and related materials, I was able to draft another petition, although the process took me several months. The next working day after I had prison officials notarize this latest writ, I was suddenly placed on a plane bound for Tennessee's infamous Brushy Mountain Prison. Again, I filed a law suit, this time a civil rights complaint in the anti-prisoner court of Judge Taylor in Knoxville. Taylor denied the complaint without a hearing and refused to issue me a certificate of probable cause for appeal. I appealed to the court of appeals for the Sixth Circuit, when issued the certificate and ordered an appeal. The Southern Prisoners Defense Committee prepared the necessary briefs, during which time I was transferred to the main prison at Nashville. On the day the lawyers were scheduled for oral arguments before the appeals court (September 18, 1980) I was again shipped out-of-state. This time I was flown to the Alhambra treatment center in Phoenix Arizona. Now I am in the process of drafting yet another complaint, although I'm sure they will transfer me again before it can be heard by the court.

When is this endless cycle of transfers to end? How long must I bounce from state to state and system to system before someone other than me objects? The political community in Seattle, the community I come from, supports the state in its continuous transfers of advanced prisoners (two dozen so far) saying what a wonderful opportunity it is to organize prisons around the country. But it takes years to get something together in one place, such as Walla Walla, so organizing can't be done as one bounces from joint to joint every few months. Me and others like me should be returned to Walla Walla immediately, where we can be with our friends and families. In order to do so, people on the outside must support us by various means. One way is by writing to Judge Jack Tanner, United States District Court, U.S. Courthouse, Tacoma, Washington, 98401, and urging him to order the immediate return of two dozen Walla Walla exiles.

Ed Mead
P.O. Box B-41627
Florence, AZ 85232

Editor's Note: Ed Mead is one of the organizers of *Men Against Sexism* (see GCN Vol. 7, No. 29) at Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla.

Speaking Out

On Dirty Pictures

By Lucina Kathmann

I approve of dirty pictures. In theory, anyway. In practice I never seem to like any. I used to check them out, at least, but I got too disappointed so I quit. Then I forgot about them altogether.

Last year a bunch of people began attacking porn, organizing groups and events meant to demonstrate that porn is anti-woman. They are Women Against Pornography, a coalition of militant feminists and conservative religious women. Women in both categories have been accused of being prudes and meddlers by people who enjoy dirty pictures, and I thought I agreed with them.

I decided to think more about it. About why I don't like porn and why I don't like Women Against Pornography either.

Dirty pictures. That means graphic representations of material which is meant to be sexy. It's pictures of people in sexy situations, like doing sex acts or inviting each other to do sex acts. It always sounds good to me.

To be sure, a lot of what goes on in life in sexy situatins can't be represented by purely visual means, such as the memories we bring or the love we bear. Sure. But a lot of sexy elements *are* visual. Two nice competent people making love are very sexy to watch. Even if one is yourself. Maybe even especially if one is yourself. And we watch our partners all the time. We like to look at their faces in passion, see their bodies move. Certain familiar gestures of passion evoke more passion in us. Making love is really very pretty. It is enjoyable to watch as we experience it, enjoyable to remember, and it should be enjoyable to see in books and magazines.

So why isn't it? Why is it that I can't find any good dirty pictures to enjoy? Where are the pretty pictures of nice women and men in all combinations, having fun and excitement and passion and love?

The dirty pictures I find instead I don't like. They're just plain awful. They're cheap work, poorly composed, poorly executed, and they represent scenes of humiliation of women. Furthermore their effects are awful. I live in a small town in Mexico which has only one movie house, which is always plastered with dirty posters advertising upcoming films. These pictures show such scenes as: a light-skinned woman, clad in a garter belt and bonds, being restrained and humiliated by dark machos. Unsavory men hang around the movie house admiring these pictures. As I pass they call out "Guera," which means a light-skinned woman, and they make obscene noises. Sometimes they grab me as well. Last year a man hit me over the head with a rock and raped me. It wasn't near the Aldama theater, but he could have been one of these men, using the movie posters as a cookbook.

I don't know for sure what the connection is between rape in my town and the movie house posters, but at the least, that theater is a hotbed of antifeminist education. I'd like to spraypaint over those posters with feminist protests twice a week.

But is this what all porn is like? Isn't this like judging North American food by McDonald's? This porn is hideous junk, and it represents hideous practices. But they're not all of human sexuality, so does their reflection have to be all of the erotica?

The sad part is, there is no alternative. In my town this weekend you get garter belts and whips or no entertainment at all. Though my town is small, I think it is representative. In the towns with three movie theaters, there are whips and bonds at all three. There is no distributor of pleasant erotica. Neither for my entertainment nor for the guys in front of the Aldama, in case any of them are still redeemable. I don't think things are tremendously different in the United States either.

The Aldama isn't the only force against women in this town. Another glaring example, that has provoked a similar reform movement to the antiporn movement in the past, is the institution of the numerous men's drinking establishments, the cantinas and pulquerias. On weekends, guys go to cantinas, get stewed, and rap a bunch of macho crap to each

other. Then they stagger out, grabbing women *en route* as they wend their way home to beat their wives. This behaviour is so notorious that when a friend complained of being crabbed by the crotch in front of a cantina while she was walking with her mother, her husband said, "Don't you know better than to go walking on a Sunday?" As the Aldama posters are a cause, so are the cantinas a cause of woman abuse. You can see it every weekend, graphically enacted before your eyes.

I suppose it's like what Carrie Nation saw in North America. She took to chopping up the North American cantinas with an axe. The theory is, you get rid of the cause, you'll get rid of the effect. Get rid of porno and alcohol, nobody will hit you over the head with a rock and rape you.

I don't know about this theory. For one thing, the same cause doesn't always produce the same effect. From my limited observations, it seems to me that the majority of people who look at dirty pictures wind up fantasizing, masturbating, or falling asleep. Some never even commit an act of woman abuse on any other occasion either. And women who enjoy pornography are numerous.

Conversely, the same effect may not always stem from the same cause. The man who raped me may never have seen the Aldama posters or any other antiwoman pornography in his life. He may have thought it up for himself.

It doesn't make sense to me, this "get rid of the cause" strategy. It sounds like logic, but it is full of holes. For that reason, I don't like Women Against Pornography any better than I liked the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

I want to insure my rights. As quickly, forcefully, and directly as possible. I was a rape victim once. I could be again. I am a victim of countless woman abuse misdemeanors. But it seems to me that my strategy must be more conservative, that is, it should stick a little closer to what my rights are and what infringes them. My rights are about me, about whether I can walk about and conduct my life unmolested, not about what somebody else sees or drinks. I would like to see the bad guys prosecuted, not as they're drinking or watching something, but when they're bothering women.

A man who makes a grab for me is an assailant. His offense is clear, unequivocal, and provable. We don't have to indict bystanders who are enjoying scenes of sexual violence on the posters or waiting for the popcorn lady. At a practical level, there's a more obvious place to start.

On a more radical level, our whole concept of sexuality is messed up throughout society. That's why rape exists at all, and it's also why we don't have pretty pornography. Most of us are filled up with disgusting ideas about sex ourselves, ideas we inherited from our environment, and those of us who aren't dysfunctional in this way have no funding to produce stuff that is not going to sell in a big way at this point. But that's why creating a new erotica could be very important. It could express a more human concept of sexuality, which some of us already fantasize or practice. I think I'd like erotica like that.

I'm envious of the freedom some of my gay men friends have right now to enjoy pornography marketed for them. For me, sexual coercion is a big issue in my life, and the porn I see depicts it too much. But — unless the Women Against Pornography prevail — there may one day be an alternative. Who knows? I'll save my *pesos* just in case.

"Speaking Out" is the column designed for the benefit of GCN readers. It is part of our continuing effort to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your thoughts, ideas, feelings and comments to us and we encourage you to respond to any ideas expressed in this space. The opinions expressed in "Speaking Out" do not necessarily reflect the views of the newspaper, the staff or the advertisers. Write c/o Speaking Out, GCN, 22 Bromfield St., Boston, MA 02108

Community Voices

who speaks for youth?

Dear Editor,

The staff and members of Gay & Young have read many of the letters sent to GCN concerning the issue of man/boy love.

G.A.Y. is the only gay youth group in the city and the state to be recognized as an agency dealing with the problems of gay young people. We receive funding from the New York City Youth Board and the New York State Division for Youth. Gay & Young is a not-for-profit corporation with a Board of Directors of five youth and two adults. The adult members, one male and one female, serve at the discretion of the youth-controlled board. The youth always have the majority vote and set the policies of the organization. The counseling staff is composed of three youth ages 18-22, trained and supervised by a trained counselor with a graduate degree.

Gay & Young, since January 1, 1980, has received over 3,000 calls from young gay people. Over 100 youth per week receive direct and indirect services, including counseling, medical referrals, housing referrals, job, and educational referrals. There is also a recreational program.

The issue of man/boy love has been discussed in our rap groups, which have an average attendance of 45-60 youths. Their ages range from 13-21 and the average age is 17. Each time a vote has been taken to see if youth favor the man/boy love concept, they have *unanimously* voted against it. The main objection seems to our youth that the older male has emotional control over the boy who does not really understand the total effect of such a situation. The counseling staff at G.A.Y. has had the opportunity to interview young people who have been involved in such relationships. In each case in which we have knowledge, the young person soon realized as he became older that he was being "sexploited." When he expressed interest in youth his own age, he was no longer wanted around. There was in each case the ploy of money "buying" the young person with cash or with expensive gifts. In some instances there was even extortion, threatening to tell the parents of the youth that he was gay.

It is very amusing to us at Gay & Young that those supporters of NAMBLA are basically doing what they are saying about their critics and

those who oppose the lowering of the age of consent laws. They are not listening to the vast majority of youth who are capable of thinking for themselves and who are opposed to NAMBLA advocating their "sexual rights." The present laws protecting children may be less than ideal, but they are far better than those being proposed by those who want to make laws to justify their own sexual desires and fantasies.

We would like to point out that G.A.Y. does not support any philosophy which is "sexist." We find that many of the letters we have read are very anti-female and we feel that this is very wrong. We also want to go on record as being totally opposed to any organization such as NAMBLA speaking out for youth and we would like to know by what authority NAMBLA feels that they have the right or the knowledge to speak for youth, the vast majority of which are opposed to the man/boy love idea? The New York State Division for Youth and New York City Youth Board have a Youth Council, in which we participate, and youth can express their opinions legitimately through such groups that truly represent the best interest of all young people.

Yours truly,
Timothy S. Flynn
Project Director of G.A.Y.
New York, NY

A Prison Project is now being formed to support GCN in its longstanding effort to get free subscriptions to the paper in to lesbian and gay prisoners and also to get books for them to read and penpals to write to. (Every other week there is a prisoner penpal list on the Classifieds page.) Volunteer help is always appreciated in this and other parts of the project (including doing outreach to women prisoners and researching and informing prisoners of their mailroom and visiting rights). If you can help with your time or a contribution, it will be much appreciated. Thank you.

autopsy of a unicorn

Dear Editor,

Recently many people have been writing to complain about valuable space in the paper wasted in coverage of issues they deem irrelevant. As long as an article discusses some aspect of the gay (and/or lesbian) lifestyle, it's inclusion in the paper should not be questioned. But if it becomes necessary to become more selective in choosing what and what not to publish I would suggest that you opt to allow as many different people to write as possible to get a maximum exposure to new ideas.

Nancy Walker has a biweekly column for this paper which appears to be very popular. Yet she was given space in the "Speaking Out" column (see GCN Vol. 8, No. 16) to voice her opinions on the upcoming (now past) election. This space could become valuable if people wrote intelligently and with some originality but Walker, as so many others, wrote on a theme that has been expressed excessively on the letters page for the last month. If anything could be deemed to be a waste of space, "Vote, Vote, Vote" is a leading contender. It presented no new ideas with which to lead a reasoned, healthy and intellectually stimulating political debate.

In addition, please let me go on record as being one of your readers who is not enthralled with (mis)adventures of your fabled "Unicorn". To be honest, I find them rather tedious.

Sincerely,
Porter Mortell
Cambridge, MA

Reminder Bylines/Datelines

In August 1979, in response to suggestions from our readers, we developed the following policy: datelines appear in all news stories to identify immediately the location of a news event. Bylines (such as "By Lisa Nussbaum") indicate that the writer filed the story from the city in which it took place. In the case that the story is written in a city other than the one indicated by the dateline, we use the words "Compiled by."

hooray for the liberals

Dear Editor,

In a continuing saga of the Washington *Post's* treatment of issues important to gay people that have also been reported on in GCN, I am sending you the following excerpt from Charles Peters' column in the Sunday October 26 *Post* (Charles Peters is the editor of the *Washington Monthly*).

You must have read about the Navy sex scandal. Seven women on the U.S.S. Norton Sound have been accused of lesbianism and threatened with discharge. Who cares whether they are lesbians or not? I suspect the prime cause of the investigation is the men who have been doing the investigating. Next time you go to a paperback bookstore, notice who picks up the lesbian novels — nine times out of 10 it will be a male. I can hear the prosecuting officer unctuously saying, "And tell me, my dear, just what happened next?"

With our armed services in such desperate need of capable people, it is outrageous to reject female or male homosexuals. If the fear underlying this policy is that the homosexuals will molest the straights, I have a solution: The Verbal Standard. Anyone may proposition anyone else so long as force or the threat of force is not used. That way, no one would be harmed, the recruiting base would be broadened, and social discourse in the services would, I suspect, be considerably enlivened.

Hooray for the liberal-minded who voice their thoughts! My only reservation is that since the column is generally humorous, I wonder how serious Mr. Peters' declaration may be.
Sincerely,
Name Withheld
Washington, DC

GCN welcomes letters to "Community Voices." If at all possible, your letters should be TYPED and DOUBLE-SPACED. Anonymous letters will not be published, but names will be withheld upon request. Letters should be addressed to Community Voices, GCN, 22 Bromfield St., Boston, MA 02108.

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Wins, Losses

Continued from page 1
the New Right. Dornan, a strong supporter of the anti-gay Briggs Initiative in 1978, was given a perfect rating by Christian Voice. Peck was supported by the lesbian and gay Municipal Elections Committee of Los Angeles and the Stonewall Democratic Club.

In Mississippi, an ultra-conservative Republican congressperson who admitted he survived a fire in a D.C. gay porno theater defeated his opponents in a 3-way race. A Jackson, Miss. newspaper also had published details of Rep. John Hinson's arrest "for committing an obscene act" at a well-known gay cruising area, the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington, Va. (see GCN, Vol. 8, No. 6).

Maryland voters, however, defeated the re-election bid of Rep. Robert Bauman, who allegedly solicited sex from a 16-year old male. Bauman was leader of the American Conservative Union, another New Right group. Even a long, handwritten note of support, which Bauman said he received from Richard Nixon, was not enough to win reelection.

In Georgia, Rep. Larry McDonald was re-elected with 77% of the total vote. McDonald is the author of an anti-gay amendment to the House Legal Services Act. He also received a perfect rating from Christian Voice.

GRNL's Steve Endean told GCN, "The House was not nearly as bad as the Senate. Several of our H.R. 2074 cosponsors who had very difficult re-elections came through. We didn't lose many cosponsors, or even very many of those who were with us on the Legal Services amendment."

Iowa
In Iowa, an equal rights amendment to the state constitution failed to pass. "I think most of us were really expecting the ERA to pass and were totally shocked that it was defeated so badly," said Shelley Bain, state coordinator for the Iowa National Organization for Women (NOW).

Bain attributed the ERA defeat to the general conservative sweep in the election; awkward placement of the question on the ballot where it was easily overlooked; and the use of the lesbian and gay issue in the anti-ERA forces' television ads.

"They showed a gay rights rally in San Francisco, and started out with the California NOW lesbian rights banner," Bain told GCN. "Then it cut to shots of two men hugging each other, getting progressively more sexual, while a voice in the background asked, 'Do you want this to happen in Iowa? Vote against the gender amendment.'"

"We lost in every county where the ads ran. The only districts that we won in were those that didn't have the ads," Bain reported.

Kathy Bonk of the National NOW Action Center in Washington, D.C. said the ads were produced by Long Advertising, the same firm that did the ads for Anita Bryant's anti-gay campaign in Dade County, Fla. in 1977. The television time was paid for by a San Diego group called Concerned Women of America, Bonk told GCN.

"They know what they're doing," said Shelley Bain. "It was a real seedy-looking ad, and very effective. Me, I thought people wouldn't care about gay rights, one way or another . . . I didn't think it was an issue."

Minnesota
In Minnesota, Karen Clark, a Minneapolis neighborhood activist who based her campaign on economic issues, was elected to her first term in the Minnesota state house. Clark was openly lesbian throughout the campaign.

On the other side of the hill, openly gay state Senator Alan Spears was re-elected to his third term.

Florida
In a surprising move, Florida voters approved a state constitutional amendment that will create a right of privacy for Floridians. Although the full implications of the privacy amendment are not yet clear, it could be the basis for litigation and legislation to prevent government intrusion into homes.

"The main thing is that it's probably going to keep government out of bedrooms," said Ed Cohen, a senior aide to Florida State Senator Jack Gordon of Miami Beach. It would appear to protect lesbians, gay men, and others from government interference "in anything that consenting adults are prone to do in the privacy of their homes or apartments," Cohen told GCN.

Amendment Two reads "Every natural person has the right to be left alone and free of the government intrusion into his [sic] private life, except as provided herein [in other clauses of the state constitution]."

The amendment was first presented to voters in 1978 by the Constitution Revision Committee, formed by the legislature every 10 or 15 years to revise the state constitution. Voters turned down all constitutional amendments in 1978.

Cohen, chair of the Dade County (Miami) American Civil Liberties Union chapter, told GCN that the privacy amendment easily passed both houses of the Florida legislature in the spring of 1980, and so was placed on the November ballot.

"There was not in any sense a big drive," Cohen told GCN. "It was just expected to go through, and a good thing, and it did."

Cosponsoring the amendment in the Senate were Senators Jack Gordon, a liberal leader, and Dempsey Baron of Florida's Panhandle, a notoriously conservative area. Baron is former president of the Senate. In the House, Rep. John Mills, a moderate Democrat, and Curt Kiser, the Republican minority leader, were cosponsors of the bill.

Mosts Florida lesbian and gay groups were quiet about the amendment before the election. "We have all been in favor of the amendment, but we have also played it down," said Rexine Rice, former chair, Lesbian Task Force of Dade County NOW. "If we made a big deal of it, that it was a gay issue, we were going to lose again. The groups against the amendment were against it because of the gay implications."

Bob Kunst and Alan Rockway, of the Floridians for Privacy Rights, worked openly for the amendment as a gay and human rights issue. Rockway told GCN he and Kunst were using a "different kind of politics. [The others] were so sure that as soon as anyone saw the word gay, we would lose. That's coming from their own self-destructiveness as gay people. That's their feeling about themselves."

However, Cohen said there was little opposition until Kunst and Rockway began their campaign: "The major hostility was because of the activity of Kunst and Rockway, who are death on anything around here. When they began campaigning, the opposition came out of the woodwork."

Kunst responded that the victory showed he proved Cohen and other "limousine liberals" wrong, saying, "The point is, we won a stunning victory, exactly by putting out all these controversial issues."

Cohen countered, "It was a victory in spite of them."

NOW's Rexine Rice added, "Kunst has almost done more harm to the gay community here than Anita Bryant. She did us more good than she can realize, but he has done a lot of harm."

'A Disaster'

Continued from page 1

right in the U.S. However, Tom Reeves, anti-draft organizer and political science teacher, disagrees. He points out that about 52 percent of eligible voters did not enter the polls, "and, according to voter analysis, people who don't vote, young people, students, blacks, Hispanics and poor whites, are moving to the left, not the right."

Endean was not alone when he asserted that right wing success was largely a result of the disorganization and complacency of a majority of liberals and radicals. "I'm tired of seeing these horrible results at election time. What do we expect? Right-wingers are working their fannies off."

"Also, liberals don't care about feminists and gay men, don't care much about feminist issues, and feminists don't care much about labor issues, and environmentalists don't care about gay rights . . . we don't have the coalition we need to get people elected. So we can't just say, 'It's the conservative times,' or 'It's Iran.' It's us we have to organize."

Jill Raymond, lesbian-feminist activist, doesn't believe that the country is caught in a dramatic rightward current. She contends that the election results merely reflect the American people's cyclical shifting back and forth between the only two options now available to them — both unsatisfactory.

Although the influence of Moral Majority in the Senate election is undeniable, many lesbians and gays don't believe that the average Reagan supporter was thinking misogynist, homophobic thoughts as s/he pulled the lever for Reagan. They believe that Americans voted their pocket-books; they saw Carter as an unimaginative and inept president who had done nothing to solve the country's fiscal ills, so they ousted him. Now they'll give the Republicans a whack at the economy and see what they can accomplish — or demolish — with their "less government" approach.

It may or may not be true that Reagan owes his victory to Carter's allegiance to John Kenneth Galbraith's economic model.

It may or may not be true that Reagan didn't win as a result of vehement anti-abortion and anti-gay and anti-women convictions among a majority of Americans. Nonetheless, many say, Reagan's election is surely seen as a victory by born-again organizers and will embolden them. Born-again, they say, will interpret Reagan's victory as a signal that queer-bashing — as well as misogynist, racist, anti-semitic attacks — will be tolerated.

"Hooligans and intolerance" will rule the day, says Mel Boozer, a black man from the Gay Activists Alliance in D.C. "I worry about the gay community getting dispirited and so cautious that we don't stay on the defensive. We must hold our ground. This will mean casualties — being abused, deprived of our livelihood."

Reagan will most likely aim his fiscal magic wand at federally funded social services.

As social service agencies bite the dust, so will the gays and lesbians who work in them. We may be seeing many lesbians and gays in the unemployment line — assuming unemployment compensation doesn't go the way of social security insurance under the Reagan administration.

Armando Gaitan, Latino gay activist and teacher in Boston, predicts federal cutbacks will have a gruesome domino effect. "The job situation is bad already. If welfare is cut, it will hurt working class people. The crime rate will go up. Then there will be a call for more law and order. This will increase the polarity between middle class and poor, between whites

and blacks and Hispanics."

Given a conservative Senate — with a Republican majority for the first time in decades, and given Reagan and the ideological atmosphere his victory creates, how must our approach be different in the future? Lesbian and gay leaders are making a strong plea for coalition building with racial minorities and the poor and environmentalists. Many lesbians are angry at the lack of gay male support for feminist causes when even moderate feminist organizations like the National Organization for Women (NOW) are staunchly defending lesbian and gay rights. Jill Raymond, pointing out how anti-abortionists and the anti-gays were clearly one and the same in this election, said that a coalition of feminist and gay movements is imperative.

Others propose a third party — "a democratic-feminist-socialist party," said Raymond. How soon? She has no idea, since she hasn't been able to fully imagine what it would be like to have a viable third party, inured as she is — as all Americans are — to the two-party system.

"But I think a third party could evolve fairly quickly if a lot of devastating things came about at once. . . . But don't get me wrong, I don't subscribe to the fascism-breeds-revolution theory of change. It isn't healthy for people to live under fascism."

However, progressives know from experience that it is risky to support a third party candidate. Unless a third party gains popular support almost overnight, and pre-election polls can convince the voters of this, people who would have supported a third party candidate will defect in order to vote, once again, for the lesser of two evils. With the moderate-to-liberal vote split, progressive candidates, exchanging death-blows, fall before a conservative contender. Elizabeth Holtzmann of New York was just such a victim this week in the three-way battle between her, liberal Jacob Javits, and arch-conservative Alfonse D'Amato, who emerged victorious.

"To get anyplace with national legislation now, we'll have to work with Republicans," says Bill Kelsey of the Walt Whitman Republican Club in D.C. "Less government intervention in the lives of individuals is a cornerstone of the Republican Party; that's one of the selling points we have with Republicans." So the tack taken by lesbian and gay rights lobbyists will need to be changed? "Yes, but admittedly it will be harder — because so many of the Republicans just elected are conservatives, not the Connecticut and Massachusetts moderate type."

"But we can get support from conservative Republicans. Barry Goldwater, Jr., and James Edwards of Alabama voted against the McDonald Amendment. Edwards isn't going to sponsor a gay rights bill, but if it comes to the floor, he may vote for it."

"Fairy love" is something that gay men should explore in the '80s, says John Ward of Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders. "It's more powerful than he-men. . . . [T]he most creative, powerful idea to happen in the past decade didn't come from working within the system. It was Stonewall — even though it was quickly aborted and turned into discos. That kind of catalytic idea makes government respond — sometimes. The fairy movement among gay men is a good idea. These ideas reverberate. It's time for another radical idea."

Are any lesbians and gay men happy about the election?

Well, Tom Reeves feels it's just as well that so many liberal Democrats lost their seats. "I worked for

continued on Page 11

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Introduction

When I returned to Boston two years ago after a five year absence, I hoped to become a part of a community that was much more diversified than the small town I had come from in the Midwest. The move was a good one for me, the atmosphere in Boston is vibrant, constructive, warm. I have met many people here who have added love, knowledge and joy to my life. But one disappointment to me has been the lack of a large, visible contingent of older lesbians and gay men. When I go to my favorite women's bar, a poetry reading, a slide show, a concert, a rally, I look around and realize that at 30 years of age, I am often one of the oldest persons in the crowd.

This disappoints me, because I think that age makes a difference. It is a difference of perspective and focus and it should serve to enrich communication and understanding between us, rather than obscure or discourage it. I often wonder, where are the older lesbians? Are they not here because they don't feel comfortable—because they don't feel welcome — or are they simply not interested? I don't know the answers to these questions but I do know that I am vaguely acquainted with only a few gays who are more than 10 years older than me. We have come a long way because of the efforts of those who went before us. While the gay liberation movement took a noticeable leap forward with Stonewall, it didn't start there, it started long before that.

This is why I wanted to write this article: because I thought it would be interesting and fun to talk to older members of the community; because I thought that talking with them could help to clarify some of the contributions they have made to the quality of our life; and because I thought that the reminders of difficulties faced in the past help to clarify the sorts of things we must guard against today.

The Times

Of the men and women with whom I spoke, most were born during the '20s and '30s. While I am no historian, there are certain things that have changed which have had a major impact and are apparent to all of us. One of the main things is that we are generally much more affluent now than we were before. Today, most of us work fewer hours to attain a quality of life which is far superior to our forebears. We have more leisure time and can use that time in more productive and advantageous ways. In contrast, says Tony Roberts a 57 year old gay man, "I grew up in the Depression and the big idea was just to survive."

As historian, Alan Berube, has pointed out, with WW II, life in America changed radically. Many men and women went into the service, leaving their small towns behind. They became exposed to new people, new ideas and new places. Women became a significant factor in the work force at home. Many people enjoyed greater freedom even if only temporarily. The armed services were filled with gay men and lesbians, many of whom would come to an understanding of themselves and their sexuality during this time. Many would find themselves in cities for the first time and would have their first opportunity to observe gay life.

At the close of the war, most people had faith and trust in the government. For the first time, many Americans would find financial comfort and security a possibility within their lifetime. Comments Mary, a lesbian who is now 53 years old, "We lived a very quiet life. We worked hard, we were doing a lot of building. I was locked into 'upward striving', becoming middle class."

The focus for many people, gay and straight, was in building for some future security. Issues of politics often seemed more remote, less connected to the individual's everyday life.

Sheri Barden, who is now 46 and Lois Johnson who is 49, recall what it was like to be a young adult during the McCarthy era. Begins Lois, "It was really a passive era. I was in college at the time [but] I was apolitical. Continues Sheri, "In those days and at that age who'd give a shit about McCarthy? I didn't. Most of us who were living then were only interested in surviving and having a good time . . . We partied, we drank, we slept around. When you woke up in the morning and felt something heavy on you, you didn't know *who* it was. It was just a blast!"

Charles Ash, a 61 year old gay man, remembers that back in the 50's, he saw no connection between his politics and his being gay. His political life was something separate from his life as a gay person.

Prior to the women's movement, sex roles were more stereotyped and women were especially penalized by societal strictures. Being single was much less acceptable then, and any single person was automatically under the pall of suspicion. Mary recalls, "Patriarchal culture tells us that we have to get married and women have to give up a lot. In my era, that was the norm." Lois recalls, "I read all of those articles in *Good Housekeeping* and *Family Circle* that told you what you had to do to be a good wife: supporting your man and all that bullshit. I felt that I was smarter than those jerks, but I had to hide it."

It was also more difficult for women to be economically independent. Mary, who took over the family business, had to fight to win equal treatment from the men with whom she came in contact. "I was very aware of being a woman in [a male dominated] profession. I worked twice as hard. [They were less willing to take me seriously] until I made them by achievement. But not without a terrible price, and the price was the striving I did all those years."

Of course, men also were more locked in than they are

now. They also had less free time, less money and were also caught in the same sort of sex role stereotyping as women. People who were single were considered to be "non-conformists" in an era when conformity was valued.

While these pressures were present there, the people with whom I spoke found ways around them. Charles Ash found a job in a large corporation after a stint in the army during WW II. Lois Johnson went to college, traveled cross-country, returned and ended up teaching. Tony Roberts returned from the army after WW II and went back to school, later to become a teacher. Mary took over the family business and worked with determination to make it a success. When Sheri Barden was 19, she joined the army "to get away from home, to escape my mother . . . I went into the army and when I [was exposed to lesbians and started to sleep with women myself] I figured, oh, I can always get out of this, I'm going home to get married anyway, so I'm just going to have a blast."

Growing Up (Suspecting You Are) Gay

Growing up gay prior to the '70s was different in at least two very fundamental ways. First, information about "homosexuals" was scarce and sometimes difficult to find. It was usually negative, innaccurate and male oriented. Second, few gays were visible and so there were often feelings of isolation and uncertainty prior to coming out.

Information, inaccurate or otherwise, was hardly ever available in anything but the print medium. Lois recalls that in the '40s and '50s, "There were all sorts of faulty psychological and pseudo-psychological books around [and] most of it was very male oriented." Sheri adds with more than a trace of sarcasm, "They were all 'experts' of course, writing their big documents."

But the information had to be ferreted out and it wasn't always the best news in town. Lois remembers looking in the library for some relevant material. "I think I went down to the public library and looked up the word 'homosexual' but found nothing of value, nothing that would have given a kid my age anything to chew on."

Mary recalls a similar experience. "I used to come to Boston alone and I'd look around a lot. I used to go to the library and I did a lot of reading. I'd look up 'homosexuality' and I'd read it. It was called a disease in those days. It was a frustrating experience. The only models I came up with were people with dykey clothes and short haircuts. I [concluded] that there was something radically wrong with me."

And that was one of the biggest problems. When one did find some information, it was so negative that people either could not accept the information or could not accept themselves. And to add to the difficulty, there was usually nobody to talk to, no other visible gays with whom one could balance it or have it verified. A visible gay, back then, was anybody who fit the stereotype.

Lois describes the effect all of this had on her. "The image that I had from the things that I read was that a lot of lesbians were pretty strong bull-dykes. They were people in the lower classes. Sometimes I would say to myself 'How come you're gay? You've had the benefits of education, religion, loving family. What are you doing here? These people come from messed up backgrounds, they drink like fish, they weigh 5,000 pounds. You're not like them.' Well, this is telling you the prejudices of the '40s and '50s in my mind. I said to myself, 'I don't want to meet any of them, because I'm not like them. I'm a woman who loves a woman. I am *not* a lesbian.'"

Coming Out In

By Chris Guilfoxy

In spite of the reality that information was hard to find and usually negative, there were some things available which provided solace to those gays who found them. Interestingly, the classics were mentioned as a source of comfort. Mary remembers her forays into the libraries. "I had always done a lot of work with poetry; I was very attracted to it. One thing that I found was the poetry of Sappho and that introduced me to some concepts. I did a lot of work with her."

Charles Ash mentions the references to homosexuals he encountered in his study of literature. He read Walt Whitman, Shakespeare and Petronius' *Satyricon*. It gave him some sense of a history of gay people and of that he says, "It became clear to me that if Whitman, Leonardo and Shakespeare were that strongly attracted to men, it can't be all wrong. It was a big help to me." Charles also chuckles when he recalls, "It was an immense spur to my learning high school latin!"

In addition to the "professional" and "classical" works, there were also some fictional works about gays and lesbians. One book that was mentioned consistently was *The Well of Loneliness*. In the course of conversations with people about this book, several themes emerged which I think tell much about what the times were like. The first is that, in spite of the difficulties, there were some things available if you were focussed enough to find them. However, it certainly wasn't easy without the existence of lesbian/gay bookstores. Says Mary, "it really puzzles me how I found those books."

Second, because there was so little available, what people did read, they remembered. Looking pensive Ma says, "The book that I first read [in the late '40s or ear '50s] was *The Well of Loneliness*." Then she laughs and says, "A great beginning!"

Sheri was in the army in the early '50s and was just beginning to get some inkling of her feelings for other women. "The supply clerk, the company clerk, the 1st sergeant, the commanding officer, all were gay. They were very tight. They were always laughing and tittering at me whenever I came along, they would hide something. I think, 'What is it they're hiding?' The supply sergeant was big. [I'd come along and] she'd hide something under the seat of the truck. I'd go after it and she'd come after me [and stop me]. One time I got away from her and got a grab onto it. You know what it was? A copy of *The Well of Loneliness*." No page attached to the next one; it was held together by rubber bands."

The third and final way in which I see this book indicative of the times is that like much of the popular and "professional" literature, its message was that no matter how good gay male or lesbian relationships may seem, they were ultimately doomed to failure. But whether the conclusion was accepted or rejected and to what extent, varied with the individual. Lois says, "I remember being fascinated by it, but not particularly identifying with it because I didn't like the heterosexual model." And Sheri says, "I hated it. I said, 'what do I want to read this crap for? It isn't like this!'"

A major problem back then was that to a person who had not come out, there was little to stack up the information up against. The options were either to believe or not believe. There were no marches or rallies to deny the lies; there was little positive information in print and gay people were not making their lives public — open to scrutiny. There was nobody to shout back. While it is no means easy today, it was generally more difficult to come out gay back then.

Coming Out

The lack of positive information concerning gays, their relative invisibility and the isolation this engendered, made coming out to make coming out a riskier step than it is today. However, the coming out that we talk about nowadays is different from the coming out that was more common in the '40s and '50s. Today, coming out often suggests some element of being out to the straight world. Many of us have attended public events; many are out to members of our families; we are out to straight friends, and so on. But in the '40s and '50s, being out was more likely to mean that you were identified as gay to some other gay people and that you sometimes went to gay establishments. Back then, going to a gay bar was about as public as one would usually get in announcing one's gayness.

When I began the interviewing for this article, I expected that I would hear endless tales of misery when people talked of coming out. I found, instead, people who coped with circumstances as they were and, who today, downplay the ways in which those times were hard and unpleasant. "You want that?" exclaims Sheri. "Alright, it was miserable, but I tend to gloss over it because I think it was just part of growing up. Love is love and it's awfully painful."

It is apparent, however, that the times did effect the individual's coming out. It often took people longer to come out and some simply gave up and opted instead to lead a straight life, or sometimes a celibate life. For some, it was a matter of not being clear on their feelings. This led to confusion, and without the words to tie those feelings to, there was often uncertainty about what to do with

them. Quite simply, there seemed to be fewer options back then in such a hush-hush atmosphere. And even for those who were able to name those feelings, there was the problem of finding others who were also gay. There were also individuals, who in spite of the obstacles, were clear on their feelings and bided their time until they could act on them.

In *RFD* (1977, #13) a 50 year old gay man, Fran, talks about his boyhood friend as one person who never made through the negative messages which society sends out so clearly. "There was one [boy at school] I felt closest to. We would feel very close and at the same time we really didn't know what to do about it . . . It's only in looking back that I recognize that if there had been an opportunity, I'm sure we would have discovered that we were both emotionally interested in our own sex . . . There was a conflict between the way he felt sexually and the pressures that were on him from his family, and his religion. . . . As soon as I heard he killed himself, I immediately knew why."

Pat Bond, in the film "Word is Out," also talks of a lesbian friend of her's who committed suicide when told that she was being discharged from the army as part of one of the lesbian purges in the '50s. There are certainly other individuals who may be known only to themselves who have elected not to become part of gay life even though that may be where their deepest feelings lie. Some individuals got married and some simply remained single and solitary. Some may have ended up in institutions, but



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Gay History: Setting the Record Straight

CHRISTIANITY, SOCIAL TOLERANCE,
AND HOMOSEXUALITY

By John Boswell
University of Chicago Press
424 pp. \$27.50

Reviewed by Michael Bronski

John Boswell's book on homosexuality and the history of the early church has been eagerly anticipated for several years by those who hoped for a definitive and revealing study of gay history. Originally a series of lectures given in Boston several years ago, the work has now been published. The author's humble qualifications against its definitiveness are well founded, but this is the least of the problem. Hopefully, many readers will be jolted enough to reexamine the nature and purpose of such scholarship in relationship to their lives and the gay community.

In the introduction Boswell states his rather startling thesis: "Much of the present volume . . . is specifically intended to rebut the common idea that religious belief — Christian or other — has been the *cause* of intolerance in regard to gay people." He goes on to say that religious beliefs may "cloak or incorporate intolerance," but that the *cause* lies elsewhere.

Quickly summarized, Boswell postulates: the urban centers of the Roman Empire regarded homosexuality as unextraordinary, the early Christian church and its literature did not consider homosexual attraction "unnatural;" hostility to gay people began after the fall of Rome, and neither christian society nor theology "evinced or supported any particular hostility to homosexuality" though it did reflect popular hostility. According to Boswell, the early Middle Ages were a time of invisibility for gay people until the revival of the urban centers where gay people thrived producing a substantial sub-culture and literature. This positive atmosphere continued until the latter part of the twelfth century when a "virulent hostility" appeared in popular, liturgical, and legal literature. This intolerance, which was also extended to Jews, witches and other minorities, continued to influence western culture until now.

Boswell is very careful in weighing his findings, noting that the very term "conclusion" may be too strong, and that any early history "must be regarded as provisional:" "Beyond these modest conclusions and the facts which support them, little can be asserted with confidence." And in the 326 densely worded, heavily footnoted pages, Boswell certainly does give us facts — a massive accumulation of facts and "evidence," so closely argued and tightly screwed together as to achieve the impenetrability and massiveness of a medieval fortress. The appearance is deceptive however for (to mix a metaphor) the fortress has feet of clay. When reaching the "conclusion" (pp 333-4) readers may feel cheated as they realize all these facts have proven very little: and that the endless qualifications, enumerations, justifications, lists, theses, proposals, and speculations have been strung upon a very thin thread of theory.

Well written and convincing history — of any period — must not only take "facts" into consideration, but must arrange those "facts" clearly, making emotional, psychological, sociological, economic, social, as well as historical sense. While Boswell's fortress of facts are arranged in support of a thesis, the thesis feels preconceived, the supporting "facts" more forced into place. The book is so cluttered with "facts" that it is often impossible to make logical sense of them. (Possibly this technique is purposeful, used to create some confusion when Boswell makes a particularly shaky, or unfounded, hypothesis.)

What the fortress of facts in *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* lacks is *any* sense of life — people's lives. There is no talk of the relationship between the psychological, emotional or sexual (a grievous fault in a book dealing with sexuality).

Boswell seems unaware of — or completely unable to deal with or conceive of — any notion of how sex relates to history, and this takes the very meat — and the interest — out of his work.

Boswell's history is essentially one of institutions — church, state — and the measures they invent to enforce and stabilize themselves — laws and theology. His assumption is that one can understand "what has happened" (history) by understanding these institutions, and further, that one can understand people's lives by examining the institutions which have been in power. Similarly "unbiased" conclusions might result from studying Viet Nam by using Defense (i.e. War) Department records. The notion that people's lives are reflected in the ruling institutions is also fallacious. We all know there is a huge gap between our lives and what the church or state says — and there is no reason this should differ for those living in other times.

Boswell writes history from an essentially scientific approach — get the facts, analyze them and record the result. This is an unworkable hypothesis because there are so few facts available from these early periods. The other problem is that when studying sexuality you can just not rely upon facts. Whether viewed privately or socially, sexuality is a personal phenomenon. The nature, instances, or manifestations of homosexual life itself are not to be found in Roman law, moral theology, or medieval penitentials. Boswell's book is bereft of any notion of what it was to be homosexual — or "commit" homosexual acts during this time of history. Consequently, *Christianity, Social Tolerance and Homosexuality* is not really about homosexuality at all, but rather a biased look at the history of the catholic church from the point of view and the interest of that institution. The book has little to do with people's lives or history in the broadest sense.

Boswell writes as though the history of western civilization (talk about misnomers) were the history of christianity. He mentions Persian, Mohammedan, and (to a much lesser degree) other Eastern philosophies and thought. But he only explains or demonstrates what he is saying about western and christian history. It could be argued that he has limited his own scope — the book's title does specify *christianity* and *western Europe*. Many historians would argue that it was not the church that was the guiding, binding force during the years after the fall of Rome and high middle ages, but rather this force was the dynamic between eastern (including the Crusades, the racism and imperialism of which Boswell barely touches upon), and the "invading barbarian" cultures (that's from the Roman, christian point of view). Boswell's conception of history is Western and Christian (capitalization mine) so it's no wonder they come out looking good.

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BOOK GAY COMMUNITY NEWS REVIEW

Boswell

continued from preceding page

Boswell cannot deny that (even according to his "facts") western culture and the church became very homophobic. Contenting himself to chart the early history of these periods, he is able to "prove" that the cause of this did not lie with christianity. He is unable to explain exactly where it did come from during that later part of the twelfth century. But by ending his book where he does, he does not have to deal with the large sack misery, destruction, and wholesale murder that the church did commit because of its institutionalized misogyny, racism, and homophobia. He acknowledges that that did happen but he does not have to detail (as he did with earlier history) the horrors of the inquisitions, witch burnings, and pogroms. Once again the "scope" of his book gives, either intentionally or unintentionally, credence and "truth" to his small world view.

A great deal of what Boswell passes off as evidence is in fact more an absence of "evidence." In his review of the book, British gay historian Jeffrey Weeks (*History Today*, July 1980) complains of Boswell's pervasive use of the word "may:" a word that sounds good, but means almost nothing. The exegesis of scripture that make up the early chapters are particularly weak in this respect:

It cannot be inferred from this that Paul considered mere homoerotic attraction or practice morally reprehensible. (p.112)
.../Leviticus/ is almost never cited as grounds for objections to homosexual acts (except allegorically). (p.113)
... Roman I did not condemn homosexual behavior as "against nature" in the sense of violation of "natural law" ... There is no implication in the passage that homosexual acts ... were necessarily sinful. (p.114)

And yet later, when faced with real objections to gayness by theologians, Boswell can state "There is in fact little reason to assume that the specific objections of influential theologians played any major role in the development of anti-homosexual feelings in Christian society." (p.164) It soon becomes apparent that Boswell is willing to interpret to make the already flimsy material fit his thesis. It's not that what he says is wrong — there is so very little to go on that any number of interpretations might work — but within the context of his whole book his conclusions seem manipulated, over extended, and forced.

Confronted with theologian John Chrysostom's making anti-gay statements, Boswell says that Chrysostom is "personally disturbed by homosexuality." He, like Paul, says homosexual acts are immoral because they rose from an "excess of desire." This is at the heart of another problem that Boswell never deals with very well. He says many times that many condemnations of homosexuality were not of the "act" itself but its "excess desire." Boswell claims that many church fathers would object to homosexual acts only when performed by heterosexuals (that is "unnatural"), but not when performed by homosexuals (that is "natural"). The history of the notion of "natural law" is complicated and Boswell's endless elucidations and conjectures about it are more stupefying than

clarifying. But even buying the bulk of his argumentation (I don't), he still never deals with erotophobia. After dismissing or avoiding the anti-gay statements of the early church "fathers," you are still left with the notion that sex is essentially bad; it is a statement that is evoked again and again, both implicitly and explicitly in most of the literature. (This includes the New Testament's teaching that "celibacy was the highest response to human eroticism." (p.148)) And it seems to me that this is a sound basis for the rampant homophobia and misogyny that occurred later.

This erotophobia is also clearly present in the church fathers' attitudes towards women. Boswell states that Chrysostom, Augustine and Lactantius (and I would add Aquinas) all expressed disgust at a man "allowing his body to be used 'as that of a woman,' since in Augustine's words, 'the body of a man is superior to that of a woman as the soul is to the body.'" (p.157)



Boswell speaks of this when he writes, "anxieties about homosexual acts were largely responses to violations of gender expectations rather than the outgrowth of a systematic approach to sexual morality": clear avoidance. He then is able to go on to say "In many cases this misogynistic revulsion from males to anything 'feminine' had little to do with sexuality: St. Cyprian thought it obscene that men should even play the role of a woman on stage." Because the book never comes to grips with sexuality — in any form: social, private, personal — Boswell is able to make such obviously flimsy distinctions. What does he *think* St. Cyprian was referring to — stagecraft? The explicit misogyny in much of this writing goes hand in hand with an implicit homophobia. Because he lacks any real feminist approach or consciousness (an impossibility since he is going to deal with the texts on their own ground) Boswell is able to side-step, avoid, and ultimately distort the material to fit his own "conclusions."

The certainty with which Boswell latches on to christian history, to the exclusion of others, is evident again and again. When discussing whether Paul's injunctions against homosexuality were a response to

homosexual (and heterosexual) temple prostitution other religions, he says "no" because Paul is not describing "cold-blooded, dispassionate acts performed in the interest of ritual or ceremony" (emphasis mine). This depiction of the religious, orgiastic, rites of the Great Mother and other Mystery Religions as "cold-blooded" and "dispassionate" is Boswell's own projection. It is telling both because of the perjorative nature of his phrasing (thus making the christian approach more appealing), and also because it's an example of his refusing to give other cultures and ideologies — or as viewing them as anything other than the minor adjuncts to his pivotal christianity. Although Elaine Pagle's *The Gnostic Gospels* was not published before Boswell's book, he did use other source material for much of the information. Much of this other material, which Boswell used is taken from D. Bailey's *Homosexuality and the Western Tradition*. Boswell takes the rather smarmy attitude of mentioning Bailey's book when he has a disagreement with it almost never to credit it as, or as containing, similar source material.

The same problem arises with Boswell's discussion of the connection between homosexuals and heresy. He spends only a few pages on the topic and generally dismisses the thought, saying that "heretical movements might attract non-conformists of all sorts." His breezy discussions of the Templars and the Albigensians (both groups were accused of homosexuality and heresy) indicate that he is not interested in pursuing any angles that do not follow his line of thinking. The beliefs and histories of non-traditional christian and pagan religions are important in and of themselves (not just in how they disagree with mainstream christianity) and can provide clues to the tone and temper of the period. But like a church historian, Boswell is afflicted with tunnel vision and cannot see anything that he considers peripheral adjunctive to his main concerns.

Boswell's charge that the similarity of charges in recorded cases invalidates the supposition that there is a connection between heresy and homosexuality does not really stand up to scrutiny. It would not be at all unusual for a repetition of charges to exist in a world where illiteracy existed; so few people could read or write that besides being the simplest way of doing things, it would also go unnoticed. Also, formulaic writing is intrinsic to any legal system. To read over the charges of men arrested on moral charges today, it becomes evident that there is a form to be followed: the correct line of prosecution is to prove fruitfulness. As speaking of writing styles, Boswell's assertion that "the excesses of the Inquisition are often exaggerated, especially in regard to physical abuse and capital punishment," resounds of State Department "doublethink." It also raises the questions of when Inquisitions are justified and how far they can go before they become "excessive." (For a much better discussion of these questions of heresy and non-christian religions see G. Legman's *The Guilt of The Templars* and especially Arthur Even's *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture* (Fag Rag Books), both of which are shockingly absent from Boswell's bibliography.)

Boswell's discussion of the eleventh century and its flourishing gay culture is more interesting, and because he is less defensive, sounder than the other parts of the

Lesbian / Gay Poets Come of Age

GIVING UP THE GHOST

by Aaron Shurin

Rose Deeprose Press

1661 Oak St., San Francisco, CA 94117

79pp., \$4.95

COMING ATTRACTIONS: AN ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN POETS IN THEIR TWENTIES

Edited by Dennis Cooper

Little Caesar Press

3373 Overland St. #2

Los Angeles, CA 90034

\$4.00

Reviewed by Felice Picano

When the history of gay and lesbian literature in the decade following Stonewall comes to be recorded for posterity, a half dozen novels, a handful of plays and as many non-fictional books may pass the test of time. But I believe the most solidly achieved body of work will be seen to have been in poetry.

We can already recognize classics — Rich's *Diving Into the Wreck*, Judy Grahn's *A Woman is Talking to Death*, Merrill's *Divine Comedies*, Schuyler's *Morning of the Poem*; but this is merely naming the most obvious titles. In his pathbreaking critique of recent gay male poetry in the Fall/Winter 1980 issue of *Gay Sunshine*, Rudy Kikel lists books by thirty-five other poets, and three anthologies, which form an essential list: and a comparable enumeration by lesbian poets could be compiled as easily.

If gay poetry hasn't received the attention it deserves compared to the tempests and controversies generated by other books, that is to be expected. But many poets

have found solid audiences, and few of the books on Kikel's list are out of print. In fact, many of them are in multiple printings, and many, more feted and prized poets in this country would envy their sales figures.

Yet all has not been roses on the poetry scene and the two books under review are obvious outgrowths and attempts at reaching around some of the most persistent and baffling problems gay and lesbian poets have faced and continue to face.

A bit of history is required here. In the seventies, some of the most prestigious journals that printed poetry were edited by homosexual poets: *The New Yorker*, plus *Poetry* and *New American Review* come first to mind. Yet gay and lesbian poetry *never* appeared in any of these journals, and few poems on any subject by gay or lesbian poets, unless they were "protégés" of the editors. Roger Austen, author of a book dealing with the homosexual novel in America called this "Playing The Game." It goes like this: everyone knows most poets are queers and dykes, but no one will admit it, least of all the queers and dykes in powerful positions in the publishing establishment. So, one after another important poets or their best works are passed over ("declined" is the euphemism) while safer, acceptable, often more academic poetry is published. Those poets who insist on writing what they want and must write do so at the risk of having to find an audience outside of the powerfully knit magazine-publisher-university poetry establishment: often through books alone, or through gay and lesbian journals. In the seventies such proscribed poets included such luminaries as Allen Ginsberg, Edward Field, Pat Parker, Paul Goodman, Harold Norse, E.A. Lacey, Thom Gunn, Judy Grahn etc. whose best poetry was de facto non-existent as far as the poetry establishment was concerned.

More recently, several of those editor/poets have come out, whether in interviews or books. Yet the

situation remains unchanged. Few anthologies or magazines will publish openly gay or lesbian poetry, no matter how famous the poet. The exceptions to this are two West Coast journals, *Soup* and *Poetry Now*. The East Coast is still firmly entrenched in the hypocrisy.

As Kikel points out in his essay, a new generation of poets arose, who eschewed the general media altogether, and who made reputations for themselves in gay and lesbian magazines: *Mouth of the Dragon*, *Fag Rag*, *Lesbian Tide*, *Gay Sunshine*. These authors then went on to publish books through small presses. On nine of the list of thirty-five poets Kikel lists were not published by alternative presses: and of those poets making their debuts in the seventies, only two poets were published by commercial presses.

All well and fine, something to be proud of: we got through, and we did it our way. But what of those poems by gays and lesbians that were not specifically homosexual or feminist? The gay presses have more than enough material to print, and only publish what their readers want. The establishment journals won't get near these tainted poets. And, since most good poets have a range far beyond the sexuality/politics axis of gay and lesbian poetry, they are stuck: their newest and best work once more unpublished.

This was the problem facing Aaron Shurin, whose *Night Sun* (Gay Sunshine Press, 1976) was one of the seminal books of liberated poetry in the past decade. Having dealt with many of the themes and questions connected with being gay, Shurin has gone on to other areas of interest, incorporating earlier insights and ideas into a poetry that is now more obviously in the tradition of such West Coast poets as Robert Duncan (who provides a preface for the new book), Robert Creeley, and Charles Olson. Not that Shurin is no longer writing gay-themed poetry. Some of the best poems in *Giving Up the Ghost* will find their way into anthologies of gay poetry. Some of these ideas are so tied to identity, the

ok. Here he is more open to other cultures and discusses the effect of Arabic poetry upon European literature. The poetry itself is interesting and it is good to have it translated and in one place. His assertion however that this was a time of more tolerance towards gay people (and other groups) is countered by Jeffrey Weeks in his review:

There is plentiful modern evidence to suggest that a distinctive homosexual identity, with an accompanying defensive subculture, emerges not in periods of great tolerance, that is in Boswell's usage, when society is relatively indifferent to homosexual behaviour, but in periods of intolerance, when it matters a great deal to the dominant morality whether a person is 'straight' or 'gay'.

A large part of the last chapter deals with Thomas Aquinas's writings on homosexuality. It is interesting to see how Boswell structures the text in a way that mitigates Aquinas's ideas, while never really denying that the saint said or his effect on future thinking. By not giving a clear narration, and by using conjecture and digression, the harshness is softened. We first read that "It is difficult to see how Aquinas's attitudes toward homosexual behavior could even be made consonant with his general moral principles, much less understood as the outgrowth of them" (p. 319). *That's to tell us that Aquinas is really a good person.* Then there is a page and a half summarizing and conjecturing about Aquinas's theories of "nature" followed by: "One would surmise from this argument that Aquinas would regard homosexual acts as no more serious than gluttony." (p. 321). *(This promotes a false assumption that reinforces the first statement.)* We are then struck with: "But Aquinas could not pursue his logic this far out of the mainstream of thirteenth-century popular morality and public intolerance, and he struggled instead to construct a philosophical justification for classifying homosexual acts as not only serious but worse than comparable heterosexual ones; in fact he promoted them to a position of unique enormity unparalleled since the time of Chrysostom." (p. 321). *So much for the integrity or consistency of the theologian; and anyway Chrysostom only had a "personal" problem with homosexuality.* Two pages later we are finally told what he did say about them: "They are the most sinful species of lust."

This is followed by three pages of the contradictory distinctions Aquinas makes about "nature" and through some fancy footwork we get to: "Although Aquinas did believe that females were in a sense defective males and although he certainly considered women inferior to men in many practical ways, it cannot be argued that he considered the condition of femaleness to be morally reprehensible. . . . Neither homosexuality or femaleness can be shown to be immoral simply because it does not represent the primary intent of 'nature', and both are in fact natural to the individuals in question." (p. 327). *This mitigates his last statement making the erotophobia, misogyny, and homophobia a matter of semantics.* Two pages later we are told that "the positions of Aquinas and other high medieval theologians regarding homosexuality appear to have been a response more to the pressures of popular antipathy than to the weight of Christian

tradition. . . ." (p. 329). (So he isn't that bad after all.) Finally we get to what he *really* said:

Aquinas played to his audience . . . by linking homosexuality to behavior which was certain to evoke reactions of horror and fear . . . with violent or disgusting acts of the most shocking type, like cannibalism, bestiality, or eating dirt. Indeed, by suggesting subliminally to his thirteenth-century readers that homosexual behavior belonged in a class with actions which were either violently anti-social (like cannibalism) or threateningly dangerous (like heresy), Aquinas subtly but definitively transferred it from its former position among sins of excess or wantonness to a new and singular degree of enormity among the types of behavior most feared by the common people and most severely repressed by the church." (p. 330). *(And all because he wasn't being logical.)*

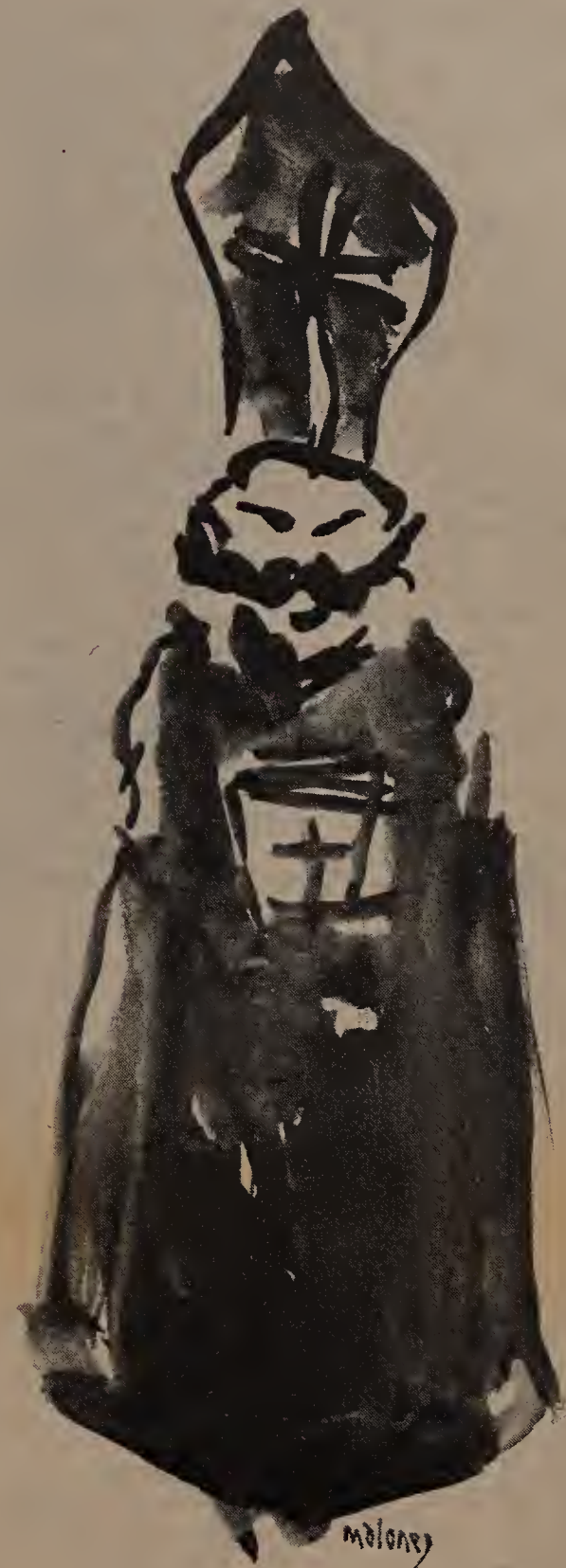
The notion that theology exists separate from popular thought is absurd: there is obviously an interplay between the two. When Boswell can state: "It must be remembered, however, that intellectual responses to homosexuality generally reflected rather than caused intolerance," (p. 330) it sounds like nothing more than a cover-up to protect the church and place the blame on what is commonly called the "vulgar masses." What is particularly striking in the context of the book is that Boswell never tells us anything about this "populace" whose intolerance was so strong as to make the prime mover and thinker of catholic morality to make terrible mistakes. By examining only the few legal and theological notations on homosexuality and postulating everything from that (and then fudging some of it) Boswell is able to give the impression that church and state were never really that terrible, and when they became so, it was because of "popular opinion" — a reflection rather than a cause.

Early in his introduction Boswell states: "Although intolerance has weighed heavily on the conscience of the twentieth century, so little is known about its nature, extent, origins, and effects in a historical context. . . ." I would suggest that "intolerance" is closely linked to "power" (a word that is totally missing from Boswell's text). To understand "intolerance" you cannot examine only those who have power, especially when their presumption is that their power is a "divine right": people with power are never very good about letting you in on the secret. By refusing to deal with exactly *who* that opinionated populace is — what they do, how they live, what they think, what their sex lives are, what their relationship to the ruling institutions is — he invalidates his own study.

John Boswell has written an academic, scholarly text that bears the mark of where, and by whom, it was written: it reflects the attitudes and prejudices of someone intimately involved with the descendants of those institutions he is writing about. Boswell would not pretend otherwise, and I suspect that some of his decisions — especially the use of the word "gay" — will greatly irk more traditional historians. But *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* is no breakthrough. True, it comes to conclusions that no one has ever arrived at before, but that merely makes it different — not apart — from any other books written in the field. It does not deal with gay people — in the sense that its subtitle implies — and I think that this is misleading.

There is a popular notion that we can rely upon academics to discover the "truth" about a situation, to present the "definitive" study that will answer all questions: that scholarship is somehow impartial and fair. People have spoken of Boswell's book as such a study. It is unfair to expect any author to labor under such a burden, and Boswell in his conclusion realizes his limitations. But there are other problems. Aside from the not very convincing arguments and scholarship, Boswell's book shows obvious leanings and inclinations. The notion of "pure scholarship" is a false one since all historians make choices and decisions about their

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must be written of again and again: like these lines from "Avowal/Voices"

I said No because all the past ones never worked
Then I said Yes eyes yes teeth lips
I said No Rhonda, think of yr career, Art, ITS
yr lover . . .
Or this from "Recurring"
. . . stall after stall
a labyrinth
of urinals. Men pose
everywhere in attitudes of enticement . . .
Or from "Amy Comes Out"
Amy, a woman
will be naked next to you
& no refusal you can conceive
will probably work.
Lovely. Well-put. Clean, classically poised, as we've

come to expect from Shurin. Yet the real meat of this book is not so much in the Apollonian poems, but in their dialectic relationship to the dark Dionysian moonmagic of the fifteen Ravings of part two with their elemental incantations and shamanistic ritualizations. Take the opening of "Raving #21, Element"

Take sand crunch it up, stomp, grind
rub the powder together, it sparks.
crystals ignite, fume into the air . . .
Or this from "Raving #15, Ave"
I'm scraping the forest floor for roots
the hunt
has eluded me. With my yamstick
just whittled-down from an already
whittled spear. I twirl dust
probe twirl-dust.

After several readings of this series, I still haven't completely understood these poems, and wonder if I ever will. Yet, like the words of children's games, they have mythic/analogic rightness of phrase and power of construction that suggest what Rimbaud was up to a hundred years ago. *Giving Up the Ghost* is a special

book, but I have no doubt that it will find its readers, gay and straight, among those who are tuned in to the magic of verse.

Coming Attractions contains no poetry of equal shamanistic verve and power, although some of the prose poems by Ann Pitrone come close. No matter, since these are young poets, just finding their feet; in fact, the collection is subtitled "Poets in their Twenties." Of the twenty-two poets represented, I only previously knew the work of Brad Gooch and Tim Dlugos; and Dennis Cooper, the editor, one of the bright names in gay male poetry.

I'm not certain what percentage of the poets in *Coming Attractions* are homosexual or not. For once it doesn't seem to matter. What these young poets share — themes, modes, approaches — is more important than where they differ. In the seventies we defined ourselves by labels — gay, liberal, socialist, lesbian, feminist. These writers have gone beyond that, into redefinitions of themselves. Their subjects aren't very different however — identity, relationships, being, perceiving. But the cultural ambience surrounding them is new. "Rock music rules their lives" Dennis Cooper wrote in a poem in *Idols*; and it is rock music, television and media-barrage as well as the morality that developed out of them that really do seem to rule these new poets. Here's Elaine Equi in "Hi-Fashion Girl"

I'm swinging through a department store of the future
because by then it will be possible to do that. I mean hear
red. Dig the brass section of this cra-zy shirt!
Or from Wayne MacNeill's "The Bootleg Star-Trek
Episodes — Chekhov's Secret Shame."

Featuring the long awaited return of
The Space Hippies! Under the influence
of Magic Puff Balls, Chekhov offers
the performance of his career — an
emotionally charged Brandoesque soliloquy

dealing with his perverted childhood
in Russian. Something a little different.
(Rental \$40.00)

There are too many other good and interesting poems in the collection for me to detail. I only wish that Cooper had overcome editorial modesty and printed his entire series on the Gacy murders — the brilliant "Tenderness of Wolves" instead of only a section of it: "Late Friends."

Coming Attractions ignores the problems of the gay/lesbian poet in the poetry establishment by, in effect, denying it, uniting young poets from the start. It remains to be seen whether this tactic will work in the long run. Meanwhile, the collection is ironic, passionate, sexy, media-drenched, fresh and a great deal of fun.

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(617) 426-4468, -8752

BOOK SUPPLEMENT STAFF

Editor	Warren Blumenfeld
Designer	Rob Schmieder
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Establishing Our Individual Identities

LESBIAN CROSSROADS: Personal Stories of Lesbian Struggles and Triumphs

By Ruth Baetz
William Morrow and Co., Inc.
273 pp., \$10.95

Reviewed by Peg Cruikshank

W e lesbians have a great hunger for stories about ourselves. After reading *The Coming Out Stories*, I wanted forty more stories about our self-discoveries and adventures. Despite all our political activism, we are only now coming out of the shadows in a literary sense. Thus, we need a great number of first person narratives, not only to stake our claim to the autobiographical form but to establish our individual identities more firmly, to know our collective history, and to celebrate our survival. Thanks to the hard work and skillful interviewing of Ruth Baetz, we now have a collection called *Lesbian Crossroads*.

As far as I know, this is the third lesbian interview book, coming after one from England and *The New Lesbians*, edited by Gina and Laurel. Of the three, *Lesbian Crossroads* seems the most creatively thought out and arranged. It gets below the surface. The questions allow each woman to show some of the complexities of her story.

One of the best features of this book is its significant representation of working-class women and women of color. In the first and longest section, called "Realizations," I had the impression that about half of the speakers are women of color.

The other sections are titled "Parents and Siblings," "Children," "School and Work," "Religion," "Therapy," "Discrimination," "Politics and the

Law," "Culture," and "Lesbian Community." Certainly it is appropriate that therapy comes right next to religion (sometimes in California it seems that therapy is religion).

The cast of characters in *Lesbian Crossroads* is about twenty-five women. In addition, members of their families comment on their reactions to lesbianism — a unique feature of the book. Elsewhere, we have gotten secondhand accounts of the ways parents and siblings have reacted to our "Big News," but it is good to have, in this book, some responses directly from the family members themselves. One of the ways our families oppress us is becoming more clear; one parent will try to shield the other parent from the appalling news, ostensibly for the sake of the other parent's welfare. However, this is *really* done to remind us, in a roundabout way, that we are bad children.

Some lesbians, no doubt, exist entirely outside of the institutions of family/school/church, and the editor's categories may reflect a wish to present us as respectable. However, a number of rebellious and unconventional women are speakers in this book, as well as those who want to be a part of mainstream America.

One thing I especially liked about *Lesbian Crossroads* is the absence of academic lesbians and writers. They were very well represented in *The Coming Out Stories* and *The Lesbian Path*. Here it is good to meet a nurse, a rancher, an accountant, a woman who has been in prison, a dancer, and a Mormon who got excommunicated as a result of her lesbianism.

The lesbian sociologist or anthropologist of the future may wonder why Minnesota, with its relatively small population, produced lesbians for all three of these books — *The Coming Out Stories*, *The Lesbian Path*, and *Lesbian Crossroads*. Many of the women in this new book seem to be from Oregon. In any case, it is a very healthy thing for women's publishing that all



these lesbians not from New York have appeared in print.

Ruth Baetz divides her material so that women speak in various sections of the book and no one interview is presented as a whole. This arrangement works well. As in any collection, certain individuals stand out. I particularly liked the observations of Chrystos, who appears also in *Caterpillars: Journal Entries by 11 Women*, Jane Salter, a many-sided woman who happens to be blind, and Jacqueline Denton, seventy-

Reality at War with Fancy

WRECKED HEARTS

Poems by Steve Abbott
Photographs by Ray Patti
Dancing Rock Press
12930 Folsom St., S.F., CA 94110
55 pp., \$2.95

STRETCHING THE AGAPE BRA

Poems by Steve Abbott
Androgyne Press
930 Shields St., S.F., CA 94132
52pp., \$4.50

Reviewed by Rudy Kikel

W hen a year or so ago I first picked through *Wrecked Hearts*, a 1978 book of poems (his third as it turned out) by San Francisco poetry impressario Steve Abbott, I was put off. The vision was clear enough: if keys to it were needed, they were provided by the section of his text entitled "Possible Clues": in four somewhat surrealistic prose swatches, Abbott made clear his disaffection for Family, Church, and State as we have come to know them in bourgeois American society. And he made clear his resource in the face of that disaffection. It was not to reconstruct Family, Church, and State, in profligate intimacy. (Only one poem halfheartedly seemed to defend what we may recognize as the *Fag Rag* alternative: "Gay fingers and mouths/racing all over town!") No, Abbott's was a poet's solution: it was to temper with language. In America today (it seems to have been Abbott's point) we *mis*use language more than we use it; what we say points up our inability to think more than it does our capacity to put thought into practice. In evidence, he imagines slogans that will resonate for us all: "Atom bombs are fun . . . Neutron bombs are the salvation of us all!" If *that* is the point to which language has brought civilization, Abbott wants none of it: what we get from him, what he gives us, is all he can give us when the language of sanity has been co-opted for insane purposes: broken syntax, disjunction, the illogical, the irrational. In a word, Fancy.

Abbott records the moment, in fact, in which Fancy in his life, like the genie from a bottle, got released. At a word from his philosophy professor, he, scribbled hippogriff chimeras . . . and rode these creatures to far away corners . . . depositing them at the foot of Bishop Berkeley's capitalist classroom seersucker Wittgenstein movie set aginbite of frolicking Mata Hari inwit . . .

Etcetera! *Wrecked Hearts* seemed to me strewn with passages in which word mayhem had passed muster. The Poetry of Desperation, I thought — if not of Rage. Was not the emblem for it Abbott's own "BIG PIMPLE rising up out of foggy face palace in sheer pink splendor, popping & spewing, enveloping entire audiences & cities in pure white pus . . ."? Okay, I thought: think of Gregory Corso's now classical Beatnik poem "Marriage," a tour de force which relied for its

humorous — and serious — effect on precisely such distortions. But hadn't it been *done*, in the 'fifties? And would what worked on the stage (I had no doubt Abbott did) work on the page? Would the past *wash* outside of North Beach, the Beats legendary "home," and in the eighties? I had to admit that when the spillage stopped, when the word lava came to a halt, Abbott seemed capable of a stimulating tartness ("Smoothness is not all . . . So why choose young men/ as if you could get home/ following a blank map"). And I certainly preferred my Steve Abbott sour to sweet, acerbic to self-pitying: "Lines Clustered on Castro Street" begins promisingly enough —

I think men's eyes in this city
are like laser beams
burning thru bank vaults
or aimlessly nursing the sky.

What magnificent treasures we steal
at a glance, or secrets hide
when we shut our eyes . . .

— but ends with two last words which I think render the sentiment . . . sentimental: ". . . and die." And in what seemed to me the best poems in the book ("Jacob's Angel Seen at the Cafe Flore," "The Reunion," "There is Something to be Said . . .," and "After Reading Catullus") there was evidence of shaping power, word precision (as "garnish" here: ". . . only evil queens would groom/or garnish John the



Baptist's head upon a tray"), and a genuine human tenderness, though in these poems the depletion of "anger" and of the Fancy which it might have unleashed seemed to have "flattened out" the "spacious states" of his poems.

Fresh — or battered — after a bout of excessive boy worship, the poet proclaims himself in "After Reading Catullus" capable of rejoicing, but his rejoicing seemed a somewhat sober, isolating affair: "My heart/is blank and aftertime in the countryside/I have learned to love myself." The book ends with the title poem, an ambitious piece dedicated to fellow San Francisco poet Aaron Shurin on the occasion of the publication of Shurin's book *the Night Sun* (Gay Sunshine Press): "poems are our only hope," Abbott therein concludes, "as on wrecked hearts we bank . . ." It was a bleak note to finish on, if a brave one, and indicated on this poetry as much the influence of the legendary Jack Spicer, as anyone else, Shurin included, when the poet was not spinning fantasies, then free from any connection with reality, he was defeated by reality's recalcitrance — by the cheating heart, by silence in Nature. Would he move from bitterness to belief, would his language touch base with the here and now or would the "Milky Way carry" him "like a clear sky" — and out of my range?

In *Stretching the Agape Bra*, published this year, Abbott gives evidence that his old problems continue: Reality continues to be at war with Fancy, Imagination doesn't hook up with the way things are. At times, we learn of the struggle through his statements about it:

Maybe I should get a new car or at least
clean it up, fix the window like the kids say.

But how can I do this & still talk to angels?

At times he throws his support to one or the other of these worlds: one poem has his grumbling in the face of PTA duties [he's a gay father]: another, conversely, admitting they were "fantasies/ which killed us" — or the accords, presumably, between himself and a lover. The best of the poems in the introductory section of *Stretching* seemed still to be those terse ones, in which fantastic expectations were relinquished for cynical wit:

Draw a picture of a pig
& hang it on a string.

This way, you can become
a spider
who thinks big.

In the beginning, that is, *Stretching* reads like *Wrecked Hearts*. At the beginning the stretching hasn't yet begun. I don't know if the poems are arranged in the order in which they were written, but in the reader's experience of the book, if not of the life behind it (and after all, according to Abbott, "I live my life by writing it. You will not know me except by what is said on this page"), something dramatic happens within the prose journal jottings collectively entitled "Days," included as a part of *Stretching* and bearing witness to an artistic crisis on the part of the poet.

His art is what these passages are certainly about: they mark the point in his book in which his real theme — not Love, which, to be sure, we will encounter again — but language and its wrestlings with reality finally



two.

I wish we had a whole *Crossroads* devoted to stories of lesbians over fifty. Also, I hope that women in the various lesbian oral history projects, that are springing up around the country, make a special effort to find lesbians who lived much of their lives before the "second wave" of feminism.

The introduction suggests that this book is intended for a broad audience, not for lesbians alone — probably a requirement for a book accepted by a large New York

house. If more lesbians gain access to establishment publishing, we many need to distinguish between stories we tell to be understood by the straight world and those we tell for ourselves. Of course, these two overlap, but there will probably always be a need for lesbian publications which are only for us and which we can control ourselves.

Nevertheless, because it has the imprimatur of a New York publisher, this book will find its way to readers who might not otherwise get very reliable information

declare themselves. Here the rival claims of Reality (the "outside/ where everything is coming apart") and Imagination ("Great shapes") are entertained, claims which earlier had seemed irreconcilable. In "Days" a swatch of the fanciful language by which *Wrecked Hearts* had been marked is reproduced — "Wizards kite asparagus wings let-me-take-you-dancing Isis skylab . . ." — only to be repudiated: "This is a lie. Wizards, asparagus wings and tendril beany shores never existed." Repudiated *and* comprehended — as "the earthquake" of inspiration "shuddering away." A portrait is included: "he dramatizes his emotions terribly, blows them up like a balloon. When he lets them go, his emotions fly furiously around the room making a great deal of noise. Finally, they fall to the floor exhausted." Now whether this passage alludes to the poet himself — the poet we can imagine having written parts of *Wrecked Hearts* — or to another, it is self-steeling for his or her art for *any* poet to have written it: awareness of the danger helps impede the progress of melodrama within the work. What emerges from "Days," finally, is a program, even a manifesto, in which the world (the message of Abbott's trees are that "Each of us grows in our own way"), of human feeling ("I'm trying to be simple & clear & honest") and of the Inner Life of this Art ("What the poem wants is that we invent a language to move it forward") are all lovingly be allowed their says.

Some readers will find Abbott's last poems more difficult and obscure than his earlier ones. I think they are the best of his I've read. If one poem "Smoke Signals" makes the defense *Wrecked Hearts* made of Fancy, others ("Body Language," "The Day Andy's Refrigerator Went," "Love Strikes Again") raise questions about the value of Fancy when it is independent of stimulus, outer or inner, unattended by

either Feeling or Nature: "Attempting a music of ideas/ we come to look like this, like maniac dancers/ waltzing with huge bears and lions. . . ." Exactly!

But all is not lost. In fact everything is gained for the poet and for us by his ruminations. And the wished-for consummation comes to him, in his book's last pages, signalled by this epigraph from *Nuclear Explosion* (by Christopher Hill): "When man turns the brilliance of the light of consciousness upon the nature of the human heart and the origin of life, the origin of the universe will stand revealed," For rapture — the poem is called "Rapture" — hits!

An intellectual appetite for lite beer, ice cream, kiss bite muzzle
WHOOSH now, loud thumping music, stepping
or fluttering into the street, into the meadow
floating past fence of taboos, pleased yet so apprehensive
I never thought I'd feel this way again:
helpless abandon, crying, squeezing each other silly
till suddenly we explode like bombs into each other's
mouths.

Pure Frank O'Hara, one thinks, with a smile of recognition — the flotation, the abandon, the enthusiasm. And certainly the New York poet has had an influence in the composition of these lines. But as to the rest, what follows "Rapture," the testament to it ("Giving Witness"), the codification of it ("Hit By A Space Station"), the discovery that the poet's experience had been adumbrated all along — for *that* we must look to the poetry and thought of the great gay San Francisco love poet of a prior generation, this poetry's true spiritual father, Robert Duncan. For Abbott's afflatus, unlike that of Frank O'Hara, seems for the length of time here to have *beld*. What love seems to have taught him is what Duncan has been preaching for decades — that the human heart and Eros

about us.

In the section where parents describe reactions to their daughters' coming out declarations, I was struck by the gap between the apparent acceptance on the part of these parents and the analogies some of them picked for lesbianism. One father says, for example, "I could have lost my daughter to drugs, to destructive political activism. . . (to) a car wreck." A daughter who hears of her mother's lesbianism decides it is no more dangerous than her mother's love for mountain climbing.

These examples suggest that it will be a long time before most of us are truly accepted by our families — before the reality of lesbianism and gay male life can be equated to plain old heterosexuality. Just this week a friend told me that when her father announced his intention of marrying and she asked if he'd told the woman that he had two lesbian daughters, he said: "Oh, yes, she took it very well; after all, she's a social worker."

One mother in *Lesbian Crossroads* resourcefully developed her own rationale for accepting her daughter: "I believe in the Ten Commandments, and I don't believe there's anything in the Ten Commandments that says you cannot be a lesbian."

Some of the details in this collection of interviews reminded me that we live in many different ways. One woman mentioned that when she and her lover travel, her parents go along, too. Another remarks that her father treats her lover like a son-in-law. He takes her aside to talk about real estate and his job. A third woman, brought out by her babysitter, later makes it with all fifteen girls in her scout troop. She should have gotten a badge for that.

Ruth Baetz wrote an essay for *The Lesbian Path* titled "I See My First Lesbian." That was in 1972. *Lesbian Crossroads* shows the impressive distance she has come (we all have come) in eight years.

opened to can introduce us to the world *and* language. One without each of the others is pointless and leads to despair, which may well have triumphed in the case of Jack Spicer. In as rapturous a dedication as exists to the collaboration of Nature, Mind, and Word — outside, I suppose, of the poetry of Duncan or at times Wallace Stevens — Abbott is able to sing: "Out of the green mist/ stretching/ . . . naming the elements wave

after wave
the universe comes to us, is not an enemy. It sings
seals
seagulls, sundry opulences of mind, wind
& air
mindful of those paltry treasures men hold (billowy
illusions)
so frail
against the dark impending stormclouds of Reality.

The outside world having proved itself amenable to Imagination through Love, Abbott is able at book's end ("Elegy") to find in analyzing his experience that "What seems most outlandish . . . is what really happened": we don't need to make it up or rely on words other than merely descriptive ones . . .

In the last paragraph of his valuable study *The Homosexual Tradition in American Poetry*, Robert Martin finds that contemporary gay poets are divided as to whether "gayness" is in itself interesting as a subject. And he finds, further, in the work of Alfred Corn "the development of a gay poetry which can transcend its gayness." Just right. I would myself put forward that of Dennis Cooper — one which relishes and seems to have no intention of transcending *its* "gayness." More power to it. I hope, however, I have here given evidence that we have in Steve Abbott a third alternative, a poet interested in extending the

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Poems of Isolation

DREAMING IN COLOR

By Ruth Lepson

Alice James Books, Cambridge, MA

72 pp., \$3.95

Reviewed by Pat M. Kuras

When I was thirteen, I had an enormous crush on our small-town neighborhood's most infamous pothead. Because she was into Jimi Hendrix (among other things), so was I. This blurb is from one of his record jackets: ". . . this debut album will put the heads of Hendrix's listeners into some novel positions." You can imagine how we tittered ourselves silly over that one.

The Hendrix blurb has been tucked into a corner of my mind for many years now and I kept returning to it as I read Ruth Lepson's *Dreaming In Color*. She puts her readers "into some novel positions," head and otherwise. Her poetry is unusual. Note the book's first poem, "Living With People:"

"Talking is something.

And tables, talking at tables.

Eating and painting and what walls.

What are they asking.

What am I looking at.

A person talking and eating.

I'm looking at the eyes

that don't look at me.

The foot tapping,

the hungry person,

what is being eaten."

Lepson's poem defies easy explanation. An ordinary kitchen scene becomes bizarre. What, if anything, is being consumed? Lepson is writing about isolation and this theme surfaces through much of her work.

One of her poems, "When You Call Me," serves isolation *a la* Gary Numan, rock singer. Lepson says, ". . . I am afraid to go in the car: who knows what might happen/traveling in another person's world." While Numan revels in his alone-ness in "Cars," Lepson fears them and finds them sinister. Cars are territories unto themselves with boundaries that she'd rather not cross.

I loved her poem, "Another Sunset," mainly for its drowning bit. It reminded me of two other poets. Stevie

Smith has a poem in which people on shore think a drowning man is merely waving — it's a frightening image. However, Kirby Congdon *enjoys* drowning in his poem, "Joy Ride." Cruising with seven buddies, their car dumps into a canal where "We drowned, one by one, clutching at each other. It was great." Lepson's poem combines Smith's melancholy and Congdon's use of illusion. Lepson is at the beach with a friend and:

"Meanwhile I am drowning.

You have no notion,

and, after I drown,

I walk back and don't say

too much about it."

Her poem, "Skywriting," similar to "Another Sunset," has got to be one of the greatest unrequited love poems ever. It exemplifies the pain, frustration and foolishness of pining away for somebody who would rather not be bothered.

Isolation, alienation, people not hearing, dilemmas — these poems drop the reader into odd visuals, leaving them wandering, wondering. I feel that I have lived many of these poems.

Lesbian Love Challenging the Fifties

ANOTHER KIND OF LOVE

Paula Christian

Timely Books

P.O. Box 267, New Milford, CT 06776

Advance prepaid orders \$5.95 each plus \$1.25

postage for 1 or 2 books; 50¢ postage each book

thereafter

Reviewed by Catherine Kemmering

In a time when women are busy sifting through their pasts for their strengths, it is a pleasure for me to do an advance review of Paula Christian's lesbian novel of the fifties, *Another Kind of Love*. It takes its title from the fact that at the time it was first published, there was only one kind of love acknowledged, that being heterosexual. Anything else was viewed as aberrant; in essence, another kind of love.

This novel is the fourth in a series of six by Paula Christian to be reprinted by Timely Books. The first three were *Edge of Twilight* and its sequel, *This Side of Love*, and *Love Is Where You Find It*. *Another Kind of Love* follows the pattern set down in these earlier books. There is a sameness to the writing which, while apparent after the first few chapters, does not detract from the storytelling. It is somewhat akin to reading Nancy Drew or Sue Barton books. You know that there will be

high adventure and/or intense romance, but always the heroine prevails. In Christian's now herstorical novel, the characters are severely tested by society and, perhaps even more harshly, by themselves; yet contrary to the popular trend in lesbian novels written during the fifties, they always triumph. This fact alone sets her novels far above the majority of lesbian novels that were being published then.

In *Another Kind of Love*, Laura Garroway, a writer for *Fanfare* magazine, feels a lack in her life. What it is she can't quite perceive. When it turns out to be a woman's love, she is astounded, but, with the zeal of the recently converted, she is ready to toss caution to the wind to follow her heart. It all too quickly becomes obvious that her new found love, Ginny Adams, an upwardly mobile young starlet riding on the matronage of Sandra Simons (a movie star character you'll love to hate), views their romantic encounter merely as a frivolous side-trip on her way to fame. This leaves Laura confused, disillusioned, and hurt. Her response is to repress her newly awakened feelings as she prepares to take a job in New York to escape her heartache.

New York: Mecca of gay women everywhere. Ironically enough, that is where Laura runs to escape her homosexual self. It would almost be laughable if only we all, every one, did not know someone who ran from themselves only to come full circle, as Laura eventually does. The New York financial backer of *Fanfare* maga-

zine, Madeline Van Norden, turns out to be a long suffering, understanding gay woman who befriends Laura. She can't explain why she is lesbian, too often falling back on the easy explanations proffered by the society which surrounds her, but she does accept herself thus allowing her to enjoy her sexuality. Laura learns, too, through Madeline and a series of confrontations with various other lesbian women, to accept herself. Like every woman who ever stood at the corner of Heterosexual Street and Homosexual Boulevard, Laura glanced down one avenue to see what she'd be leaving behind and then gazed in the other direction to see what she'd be gaining. She knew she could get hurt "crossing a busy street," but Christian gave her the guts and determination to see her particular odyssey through to the end.

You are ensured literary entertainment with *Another Kind of Love*. It has all the ingredients — just enough characters to keep the story moving along with muddling it up, lots of detail about the early fifties California and New York scenes as well as scenery, and a positive upbeat ending that will make any lesbian reader seek out her lover to give her a resounding smooch. Whenever it is to be released, *Another Kind of Love* will be a welcome addition to any treasure trove of Lesbiania. The paperback edition was priced at 35¢ when it was originally published in 1961, but prices are not what they used to be.

Standing Up Through Time

MERCY DROP AND OTHER PLAYS

by Robert Patrick

Calamus Books

Box 689, Cooper Station, NYC, NY 10003

132pp., \$5.00

Reviewed by Michael Bronski

Recently a theatrical producer told me that "of course Robert Patrick's plays were all good, but they were so dated: so *sixties*." Being a "child of the sixties" myself (what an awful *Time* magazine phrase!) I took umbrage and asked for an explanation. It seems as though Robert Patrick's plays are all about long hair; finding yourself; acting weird; and generally being against things. Aside from the fact that most of these charges could be leveled against Aeschylus, I thought it implied a rather scathing, though unintentional critique of post-sixties theater.

American theater has been a generally impoverished field. Looking over the list of Pulitzer-Prize winning plays, there is hardly anything that will still hold the boards today. With the exception of Tennessee Williams, and the best of Edward Albee, what the American theatrical tradition has lacked is any form of vision: the poetic vision that is able to clearly see reality; first beneath to understand what really is; and then beyond to see what might be. The kitchen sink realism (not to mention patriarchally obsessed) drama of Arthur Miller are the direct forebearers of Neil Simon's living room comedies: the difference being that Simon substitutes tired one-liners for Miller's tragic epiphany. This, of course, is all tied in with the economics of producing plays: the dialectic between the amount of money involved and the audience the play will have to attract to make a profit. The advent of off-Broadway changed this somewhat, but it soon followed the success-oriented (dependent upon critics — large budgets — audience pleasers) style of uptown. In the early sixties, off-off Broadway was born and for a good time managed to escape these pitfalls and was able to produce plays and playwrights of considerable and original power and vision. Robert Patrick was intimately connected with the first off-off-Broadway theater — Cafe Cino — and since that time has produced scores and scores of plays of extraordinary range and quality.

Mercy Drop and other Plays, is a very attractive, lavishly illustrated, collection of one long and four short Patrick plays. It is published by Larry Mitchell's Calamus Books (a small gay press), and I think that this is important because Patrick (as have many many other gay writers) has a history of being slighted by the chronicles and publishers of mainstream culture. Although he has had great success with *Kennedy's Children*, the plays in *Mercy Drop* are more subversive, more aware of what is and what could be.

One is hard-pressed to think of many satiric epics of the stage. Perhaps Jarry *Ubu Roi* with its bitter, savage slashings at bourgeois culture is a prime example. But *Mercy Drop* — the long play here — has a complexity of thought and structure that sets it apart from most other works. Set in the near future, the play is a television show that is designed to bring true stories to home viewers in order that they may see the light and conform. This particular show is a live, unrehearsed, reenactment, under the influence of LSD, of Johnny Baxter's abandoning his hippie/faggot lifestyle and returning home to his parents. The gimmick is that the show has been written and supervised by his ex-lover, Marvin, who has sold out to TV. It is difficult to convey the inventiveness here: there are shows-within-shows-within shows, satirical songs, parodies, an abundance of critical commentary — not to mention the usual hallmark of Patrick's unsettling linguist facility and

penchant for terribly funny (though never gratuitous) one liners.

The pleasure of *Mercy Drop* is that it takes on so much and with such apparent ease. The lumbering prosody of a Miller or an Odets pales next to the poetry here. Avoiding the temptation to write about homosexuality (a great temptation since no one usually *ever* writes about it) Patrick is able to place sexuality (all sexuality) into a social context that enlarges rather than narrows his scope and concerns.



At some counterpoint to the larger concerns in *Mercy Drop*, the three plays that form *The Loves Of The Artists* trilogy are concerned with, apparently, nothing but homosexual relationships. Essentially three skits, they chronicle the love affair between Ludwig and Wagner, Diaghlev and Nijinsky, and Hymen and Car-bundle (famous rock stars). Each of the skits is just a few pages long and filled with very funny throw away lines. What is extraordinary here is that Patrick has presumed a cultural norm of homosexuality: it doesn't matter whether these people were actually lovers or not. In a reality filled with homophobia, Patrick has envisioned a totally gay world. But because the plays deal with concrete relationship problems they never become "fantasy" (whatever that is in drama, anyway) but the embodiment of a totally gay vision. He has taken a bold dramatic concept — "what if the whole world was gay" — and predicated his human dramas upon that. (I suppose you could say that Arthur Miller's dramatic concept is that the whole world is either guilty or a failure; but that is so uninteresting.)

The final play in the collection is *The Family Bar*. This is perhaps the shorter Patrick at his best. In the future the government has banned all roles, *especially* family roles. As a result, seedy bars have blossomed in which people can act out their family fantasies. (It's sort of like an S/M back room bar; only set in a kitchen.) Although some of the satire might be a bit obvious and some of the interchanges sound like really good burlesque bits, the sheer imaginativeness and audaciousness of the idea — and the fact that it works perfectly on several levels — makes it a perfect, seamless play.

Robert Patrick's roots in the off-off-Broadway theater influence even his most recent work. There is an inventiveness and a healthy disregard for traditional dramatic forms that his plays (and the other off-off-Broadway playwrights from the sixties) have which is not only a refreshing change, but which give the pieces

their depth and weight. There has been a trend the last few years to denigrate the sixties: people were just acting out; no one knew what they wanted; it was all idealism and no reality; they were narcissistic; all they wanted were drugs. It seems to me that this "decade thinking" is illogical and dangerous on two points. First of all the "sixties," which all these people seem to talk about, was essentially a product of *Life* and *Time*: it was media hype to sell magazines. When people speak in these generalities, they usually have little idea of the place of the sixties in a long range historical process. The second point is that the sixties were a time of profound change (the women's movement, the gay movement, major breakthroughs in the civil rights battles, and the general deterioration of the patriarchal family. Change frightens people and they are loath to acknowledge it; when they must, they usually try to dismiss it.

The changes that occurred in the sixties were not anachronisms — change has happened before and is happening now and will happen again. Because so much new, inventive, and good solid theater came about during the sixties — theater that actually said something — it many times gets slighted in the rush to make way for the seventies and eighties. It is not coincidental that the two biggest hits of the seventies were *Star Wars* and *Annie*, both elaborately praised *precisely* because they *meant* nothing.

The plays in *Mercy Drop* were written in the sixties. They are fine examples of Robert Patrick's work — moving, critical, funny (very funny), and full of perceptions. There is no evidence of datedness, and in fact, they stand out amid the drama of the seventies and eighties, like bright lights illuminating our way through this mess of a world.

Boswell

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material and presentation. I think it is important to ask what an author's leanings are and how they effect his or her work.

To speculate for a moment: I think that many advocates of *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* are under the impression that the book will sway the minds of church people or academics. By buying Boswell's thesis (homophobia is rooted in a historic popular tradition, not intrinsic to church, to scripture or original church doctrine) they hope to both excuse and overcome the anti-gayness that is integral to today's church. I think this is naive — misogyny and homophobia are integral and deeply rooted in both church structure and tradition — but also I think it is just not sensible. To quote English wit Quentin Crisp: "It is not the simple statement of fact that ushers in freedom; it is the constant repetition of them that has this liberating effect. Tolerance is the result not of enlightenment, but of boredom."

I think that perhaps the most important question to be asked of a book is *cui bono?* (to whose benefit?). It seems to me that the answer here is not gay people, the common reader, or even scholarship, but rather it is the institution of the church and religion in general. In a recent Boston speech Boswell called for a theology that is based upon "fidelity to Christ": a parochial view to say the least.

Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality collects a lot of facts, but in the final analysis it accomplishes very little. It is so bound up with its preconceptions and its limited view of the world (western and christian) that it ultimately offers very little to readers eager to learn about a gay heritage, gay history. What there is — the eleventh century poetry — is interesting, but as a whole the book does not sustain even the modest claims it makes for itself.

Abbott continued from page 5
forms and themes of gay poetry without any loss of political fervor — a poetry which moves on, moves up, in his own language, from the devastations, the sinkings, of *Wrecked Hearts* ("Thumbs up, we swerved to avoid/ ballooning upward over the rooftops, over the trees"), without moving away from its erotic roots. Abbott is well-known on the West Coast, the editor of the magazine *Soup*, a co-editor of *Poetry Flash* (probably as poetry calendars go unsurpassed for comprehensiveness anywhere else in the country), and one of only "the two younger gay voices" — Neeli Cherkovski is the other — Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Nancy Peters mention in their *San Francisco Pictorial Literary History*, published just this year. Unless I am myself suffering from only a momentary "rapture," Steve Abbott is a genuine "ind," a gay poet in whose works there is "a perpetual wedding of risk & surprise ritual," a relentlessly radical vision that is ever in the process of accomodating itself in — or beyond the boundaries of — form. Precisely what we have all along looked to San Francisco poetry for!

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ow many we simply do not know. For some, coming out was protracted, but not at all lled with misery. It was a period of self-growth leading to self acknowledgement. Lois was one such person, and she tells of that process of growth. "I remember feeling the first real emotional feelings towards women when I was 15 or 16. Then I went to college and had a succession of crushes on different women. In my freshman year at college, about 1949 or 1950, I had a crush on Ann. Whenever she played the piano, I used to stand around with my mouth hanging open. I really enjoyed being in the gym class with her. I used to hang around and try to think of ways to see her more. At that time, I don't think I even knew the word lesbian. I think a glimmer of it might have crossed my mind with utter horror. But this couldn't possibly have anything to do with me. I was going to grow up and be very conventional.

"[After college] when I was 23 or 24, I went to California. I was living in a YWCA and again, developing some pretty close friendships. I think the lesbian thing was pretty close to the surface, just below consciousness. I could think, 'There's something going on here' and then just throw that below the surface again.

"I met a woman who was not very attractive, and to tell you the truth, scared the living daylights out of me. She wanted me to have lunch with her, go to the bookstore with her. She took me to lunch one day and I suddenly began to realize that there was something going on there. I didn't like her and so rejected the whole thing. But it was her I disliked and not the feelings towards women."

This was the beginning of Lois's consciousness of being a lesbian and in 1958, when she was 25, she fell in love with a friend who this time was also a lesbian and with whom she had her first relationship.

For some people, coming out was also protracted but not because it took them long to identify their own feelings. Mary had her first relationship when she was 23 even though she suspected her lesbianism in her teens. With Mary, the problem was not as much in recognizing and accepting her sexuality, as in finding other lesbians. "When I was in my teens, I started suspecting I was a lesbian because even though I was dating boys, I found that my most fruitful relationships and the people I aspired to emulate were women. At that time there wasn't a whole lot available as for finding things out. Homosexuality was something that my family didn't even talk about. I knew what the word meant and knew it had an extremely negative connotation. The kids would talk and say, 'He's strange' or 'He's queer,' and the person would be excluded. The whole thing was a negative kind of concept. But even with that, I could still see that I was very attracted to women. What it meant to me was that I was an individual who was not acceptable."

The first woman to whom Mary made a sexual advance was a close friend. "I felt that there would be a good response because we were so close in so many ways. And I also felt like 'what the hell,' I had had experiences with men and not found them satisfying. I knew that I wanted to sleep with women. There was a recklessness about it. I figured, what did I have to lose?"

When Mary's friend refused her advance, she did so with understanding. In spite of that, the failure made Mary much more cautious about future advances. "I was embarrassed, extremely embarrassed."

But at the age of 23, Mary had her first experience with a woman and thus began a 4 year relationship. "We'd arrange to meet for dinner — we met a number of times before there was any physical involvement. It just happened very naturally. I didn't feel any sense of guilt — it was great!"

Tony Roberts came out in 1946 at the age of 23. Like Mary, he could trace his gay feelings back to childhood,

the '40s And '50s

although he did not always know the word homosexual could be applied to him. Tony tells of reading poems by Walt Whitman in his late teens and being able to identify with them and having some vague ideas about an idealized comradeship. Again, lack of information in the '40s could often lead to confusion about what to name one's feelings and thus how to act on them. Says Tony, "I've know since I was 5 that I liked males. But I didn't know what it was. I knew I was different, I even used to walk differently. A friend of mine had to teach me how to walk in a more masculine way. The kids used to make fun of me, call me a sissy, even beat me up. So I turned to books. I was different from many points of view."

But in 1942, at the age of 19, Tony enlisted in the army and was sent to Europe. Tony remembers enjoying the all-male atmosphere although he still had not come to grips with his feelings. In 1946, while in a barracks in Germany, Tony overheard two of his fellow GIs talking. "I didn't know what it was until 1946 in Germany when I overheard a couple of [gay] guys talking. And I thought, 'Why that's exactly the way I feel.' And then one used the word homosexual and I thought, 'Well that's what I must be!' But I was 22 — that's when I first knew the word."

Tony continues, "When I finished the army and returned to Boston, I felt very strange. I was used to this male ambience [of the army] and I liked it. [By this time], I knew I was gay but had had no experiences except for one [brief] one with a German. I thought it was something to be cured! So I went to [a therapist]. Finally, after 3

sessions, he told me, "My advice to you is to express yourself sexually as you must — but keep yourself out of the hands of the police." I didn't accept it. I wanted to be cured, so I went to the veterans hospital and [the therapist] said, 'What's your problem?' and I said 'Inversion.' He said, 'What's that?' By the time I explained it to him I was so thoroughly disgusted that I finally accepted it then and have accepted it ever since. I realized that my first therapist was right."

By this time, Tony was attending Harvard, "... and there were a couple of johns with glory holes. And I was picked up. I think I heard about the bars from the contacts I made there."

In the '40s and '50s, the military service became the place where many gay people came to some understanding of themselves and their sexuality. As Alan Berube has pointed out, it was the first time for many young people that they found themselves in close quarters with members of the same sex. For some, it was ultimately a frustrating and painful situation to be in. But for others, such as Sheri Barden, it was a wonderful experience. Sheri describes events leading up to her coming out. "When I went into the army, I was 18. That was back in 1953. I was surrounded by gay women. Out of 270 women, 200 were gay. There would be a lot of things going on and [those who were straight or just plain naive] would be wondering what they were. Well, this is crazy, but I thought, 'These kids have such a good time!' We played softball and I was always sort of a chaperone because I was the smallest. They took me everywhere. [There was one woman who] had taken a shine to me. She told me once, 'I love you.' I said, 'That's great, but I'm really not interested. I mean, I love you too — but.' At that time, I was teeter-tottering. I didn't know what she was talking about. I liked her a lot, but I didn't understand why.

"[I started] hanging around with these kids, Beverly and Billie. Then I realized [that I was in love with Beverly] and I went to a friend and said, 'I have this problem, I think I'm in love with Beverly.' She said, 'Oh, yuh, uh, nice day out isn't it.' And I found out later that she was gay. That was very painful for me."

Soon thereafter, Sheri came out to Beverly, and her story continues. "But Beverly was getting out of the army, and before she left she said, 'There's somebody coming and she's trouble. If I find out that you've been anywhere near her, I'm going to have the shit kicked out of you. You stay away from her!' [Well,] when the bus came in, I'm right out there in my best clothes, hanging around. She'd [the new woman] come out and say, 'Anybody got a cigarette?' And I'd say, 'I do! I do!' One night she said, 'Anybody got any books?' And I said, 'Yuh, I do.' And I brought her five books, two of which were gay. She brought them up the next day and said, 'Why did you bring me these books?' I said, 'Hey, you asked for books. . . .' It was all orchestrated, right? So we sat in her room and she's playing Mozart and Beethoven and I thought, 'Cut the crap! Let's get on with it.' But she was scared. I'm dying for her to make the first move. Finally, after about five hours, I'm sitting on the floor and she finally says, 'I'm going to do something that might upset you.' I said, 'No it won't, no it won't.' Then she kissed me. And within a matter of 60 seconds I had her on her back. I was making love to her. And I knew everything. I think that there is such a thing as instinct. I just knew what to do."

Charles, who came out prior to WWII says, "I came out gradually, over a long period of time. As far as I'm concerned, I always was gay, but I came out to myself in junior high school. [In high school] I made a stab at the dating game because it was expected. But my heart was not in it. When I fell in love [with boys] in high school, it was the finishing touch — I knew I was gay. [Although] I knew intuitively that I was treading on dangerous ground, this is

when I finally decided, 'This is how I am.' [In adolescence] I was uncertain, coy and ill at ease, but I don't remember any agonizing self-appraisals [or] that I felt enormous guilt.

"I remember feeling very impatient to get to the city and get to know my way around because I had this instinctive feeling that gay people lived more freely in an urban environment. I think that gay people, if they are reasonably alert, have a sense of this. You head for an urban environment because it provides more variety, tolerance and anonymity."

"[When in college] I met some older gay men who tried without any great resistance on my part, to seduce me. But my first encounters with gay people were not particularly rewarding. The first gay bar I went to was pretty raunchy. I was even shocked at the language people used. It almost amounted to a kind of aversion therapy; it really shook me up. I found the bar, but I don't remember how. It wasn't listed in any directory, that's for sure!" Charles also remembers meeting gay men in a second-hand bookstore in the Copley Square section of Boston.

Sheri, Tony and Charles all served in the armed forces — Tony and Charles during WWII and Sheri in the early to mid '50s. For Tony, it was an enlightening experience although he had only one brief gay sexual encounter: He mentions the fear that imprisonment or discharge conjured up if you should be caught. This fear was a factor in him not seeing more when in the service. Charles also had a few brief encounters and recalls, "I did know gay people in the army but didn't find out until later that they were gay.

While we were not doing something every minute, they didn't leave us a lot of time for existential brooding, either. There were chances to do things. However, I was pretty young, naive and repressed and probably wasn't aware of a lot that went on. The few brief encounters that I did have suggested a lot went on."

For Sheri, the opportunities were numerous but she felt that the risks varied. "We lived constantly under the threat of being court-martialed. I was caught on more than one occasion. But there were 270 of us and 200 of us were gay. It would have been very difficult to purge our outfit. It would have been embarrassing if there was a purge. I was caught on more than one occasion, but I was always caught by another lesbian."

But there were risks. "One night I was in Ft. Dix and there was a big thing going on. People running around and yelling and screaming at one another. What had happened was the the company NCO barged into a room and caught two women in bed. That's all you need in the army is to be caught in bed. They were court-martialed."

After You're Out

Coming out, of course, was a major life event for many gays of the '40s and '50s. For some, it was a relief from the loneliness which they had felt up to this point and it also enriched their lives. Mary says, "With the exception of a teacher I had had, [my first lover] was the first woman I could really relate to. The relationship on many levels was to me so gratifying because I really had a lot of doubts. At that point in my life, it was a salvation for me because I was beginning to feel really desperate. I found myself talking to her about things that were really vital. And this had been the burden — that there had been no one to talk to. This relationship lasted 4 years and was a very fine and fortunate one for me. We're still friends (after 30 years) and that says something."

The relief came with knowing that it was possible to have a full and satisfying relationship and also with being able to finally put to rest the question of whether one should ignore one's feelings and simply lead a straight life, perhaps even marry. Again, Mary comments, "That was put to rest for all time. I felt then, that's just not for me. It was a conflict I had had, being ambivalent, switching my thinking. It was gone and I felt comfortable with that."

Coming out also meant changes in terms of where and with whom one socialized. But the choices back then were more limited than they are today. For the most part, socializing meant going to one of a limited number of bars or spending time with a small, usually closed, group of friends. The friendship groups tended to be small because of the difficulty in identifying other gays. Mary recalls, "There wasn't that easy kind of flow that I have in my life now. You meet [gay] people and you don't even think about it."

The women I spoke with travelled in small circles. Lois and her first lover did not know any other lesbians. "I spent a lot of my life going to gay male parties and being the only woman there. Neither [my lover] nor I drank and we wouldn't go near the bars. She and I lived very much in an ivory tower. We used to have parties and we had gay men over but we didn't have any women over. We didn't know any and we didn't dare look for any."

While Mary's circle wasn't much larger, it was entirely women. "[My first lover] had a group of friends and I didn't know anybody. But then I started meeting people through her. [But the circle] was about 10 people at most. The social activities were pretty minimal. Most of the couples I knew were pretty isolated. That was the real problem. . . . And this was one of the critical points. It was very hard for people to get to know another person that they liked and they wanted to sleep with. And [when they finally found somebody] they weren't about to risk losing them. There was a lot of jealousy and a real apprehension. And I can understand that now."

But Charles had a different experience and recalls, "There was a group of us who met every Saturday night in the chess room of the Hotel Touraine." Charles also had a number of friends in New York City with whom he has maintained long-standing ties. For a number of years, Charles spent almost every weekend in New York.

Although the bars were not a major feature in the lives of any of the gays/lesbians I talked with, it is true that everybody had something to say about them. This is because even for people who did not go to bars often, they were still important. Charles says, "Bars have been a feature of gay life for as long as I can remember." For one thing, they were perhaps the first public institutions where gays could meet other gays. For all the negative aspects, it still is important to remember what they provided to people who might otherwise have been isolated. There were spaces where gays no longer had to spend enormous energy in feeling another person out, trying to figure if she/he might be gay.

Mary talks about it this way, "[Outside of the bars] you'd have to [meet other lesbians] by intuition and verbal skirmishing. The energy that went into it was phenomenal. You'd suspect. Sometimes it would take a long time before it would come out. [Then] you'd breathe a sigh of relief and say, 'Oh, now I can talk to this person.' I guess the comforting part of going to the bars was knowing that you didn't have to go through all of those games."

Of the bar scene in Boston in the '40s and '50s, both Tony and Charles noted that they tended to attract clientele from similar socioeconomic levels. There was Playland, a "working class" bar; the Hotel Touraine, a "middle class" bar; The Silver Dollar and the Punch Bowl which

Continued on page 13



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"[After college] when I was 23 or 24, I went to California. I was living in a YWCA and again, developing some pretty close friendships. I think the lesbian thing was pretty close to the surface, just below consciousness. I could think, 'There's something going on here' and then just throw that below the surface again.

"I met a woman who was not very attractive, and to tell you the truth, scared the living daylights out of me. She wanted me to have lunch with her, go to the bookstore with her. She took me to lunch one day and I suddenly began to realize that there was something going on there. I didn't like her and so rejected the whole thing. But it was her I disliked and not the feelings towards women."

This was the beginning of Lois's consciousness of being a lesbian and in 1958, when she was 25, she fell in love with a friend who this time was also a lesbian and with whom she had her first relationship.

For some people, coming out was also protracted but not because it took them long to identify their own feelings. Mary had her first relationship when she was 23 even though she suspected her lesbianism in her teens. With Mary, the problem was not as much in recognizing and accepting her sexuality, as in finding other lesbians. "When I was in my teens, I started suspecting I was a lesbian because even though I was dating boys, I found that my most fruitful relationships and the people I aspired to emulate were women. At that time there wasn't a whole lot available as for finding things out. Homosexuality was something that my family didn't even talk about. I knew what the word meant and knew it had an extremely negative connotation. The kids would talk and say, 'He's strange' or 'He's queer,' and the person would be excluded. The whole thing was a negative kind of concept. But even with that, I could still see that I was very attracted to women. What it meant to me was that I was an individual who was not acceptable."

"The first woman to whom Mary made a sexual advance was a close friend. 'I felt that there would be a good response because we were so close in so many ways. And I also felt like 'what the hell,' I had had experiences with men and not found them satisfying. I knew that I wanted to sleep with women. There was a recklessness about it. I figured, what did I have to lose?"

When Mary's friend refused her advance, she did so with understanding. In spite of that, the failure made Mary much more cautious about future advances. "I was embarrassed, extremely embarrassed."

But at the age of 23, Mary had her first experience with a woman and thus began a 4 year relationship. "We'd arrange to meet for dinner — we met a number of times before there was any physical involvement. It just happened very naturally. I didn't feel any sense of guilt — it was great!"

Tony Roberts came out in 1946 at the age of 23. Like Mary, he could trace his gay feelings back to childhood,

the '40s And '50s

although he did not always know the word homosexual could be applied to him. Tony tells of reading poems by Walt Whitman in his late teens and being able to identify with them and having some vague ideas about an idealized comradeship. Again, lack of information in the '40s could often lead to confusion about what to name one's feelings and thus how to act on them. Says Tony, "I've know since I was 5 that I liked males. But I didn't know what it was. I knew I was different, I even used to walk differently. A friend of mine had to teach me how to walk in a more masculine way. The kids used to make fun of me, call me a sissy, even beat me up. So I turned to books. I was different from many points of view."

But in 1942, at the age of 19, Tony enlisted in the army and was sent to Europe. Tony remembers enjoying the all-male atmosphere although he still had not come to grips with his feelings. In 1946, while in a barracks in Germany, Tony overheard two of his fellow GIs talking. "I didn't know what it was until 1946 in Germany when I overheard a couple of [gay] guys talking. And I thought, 'Why that's exactly the way I feel.' And then one used the word homosexual and I thought, 'Well that's what I must be!' But I was 22 — that's when I first knew the word."

Tony continues, "When I finished the army and returned to Boston, I felt very strange. I was used to this male ambience [of the army] and I liked it. [By this time], I knew I was gay but had had no experiences except for one [brief] one with a German. I thought it was something to be cured! So I went to [a therapist]. Finally, after 3

sessions, he told me, 'My advice to you is to express yourself sexually as you must — but keep yourself out of the hands of the police.' I didn't accept it. I wanted to be cured, so I went to the veterans hospital and [the therapist] said, 'What's your problem?' and I said 'Inversion.' He said, 'What's that?' By the time I explained it to him I was so thoroughly disgusted that I finally accepted it then and have accepted it ever since. I realized that my first therapist was right."

By this time, Tony was attending Harvard, "... and there were a couple of johns with glory holes. And I was picked up. I think I heard about the bars from the contacts I made there."

In the '40s and '50s, the military service became the place where many gay people came to some understanding of themselves and their sexuality. As Alan Berube has pointed out, it was the first time for many young people that they found themselves in close quarters with members of the same sex. For some, it was ultimately a frustrating and painful situation to be in. But for others, such as Sheri Barden, it was a wonderful experience. Sheri describes events leading up to her coming out. "When I went into the army, I was 18. That was back in 1953. I was surrounded by gay women. Out of 270 women, 200 were gay. There would be a lot of things going on and [those who were straight or just plain naive] would be wondering what they were. Well, this is crazy, but I thought, 'These kids have such a good time!' We played softball and I was always sort of a chaperone because I was the smallest. They took me everywhere. [There was one woman who] had taken a shine to me. She told me once, 'I love you.' I said, 'That's great, but I'm really not interested. I mean, I love you too — but.' At that time, I was teeter-tottering. I didn't know what she was talking about. I liked her a lot, but I didn't understand why."

"[I started] hanging around with these kids, Beverly and Billie. Then I realized [that I was in love with Beverly] and I went to a friend and said, 'I have this problem, I think I'm in love with Beverly.' She said, 'Oh, yuh, uh, nice day out isn't it.' And I found out later that she was gay. That was very painful for me."

Soon thereafter, Sheri came out to Beverly, and her story continues. "But Beverly was getting out of the army, and before she left she said, 'There's somebody coming and she's trouble. If I find out that you've been anywhere near her, I'm going to have the shit kicked out of you. You stay away from her!' [Well,] when the bus came in, I'm right out there in my best clothes, hanging around. She'd [the new woman] come out and say, 'Anybody got a cigarette?' And I'd say, 'I do! I do!' One night she said, 'Anybody got any books?' And I said, 'Yuh, I do.' And I brought her five books, two of which were gay. She brought them up the next day and said, 'Why did you bring me these books?' I said, 'Hey, you asked for books. . . .' It was all orchestrated, right? So we sat in her room and she's playing Mozart and Beethoven and I thought, 'Cut the crap! Let's get on with it.' But she was scared. I'm dying for her to make the first move. Finally, after about five hours, I'm sitting on the floor and she finally says, 'I'm going to do something that might upset you.' I said, 'No it won't, no it won't.' Then she kissed me. And within a matter of 60 seconds I had her on her back. I was making love to her. And I knew everything. I think that there is such a thing as instinct. I just knew what to do."

Charles, who came out prior to WWII says, "I came out gradually, over a long period of time. As far as I'm concerned, I always was gay, but I came out to myself in junior high school. [In high school] I made a stab at the dating game because it was expected. But my heart was not in it. When I fell in love [with boys] in high school, it was the finishing touch — I knew I was gay. [Although] I knew intuitively that I was treading on dangerous ground, this is

when I finally decided, 'This is how I am.' [In adolescence] I was uncertain, coy and ill at ease, but I don't remember any agonizing self-appraisals [or] that I felt enormous guilt."

"I remember feeling very impatient to get to the city and get to know my way around because I had this instinctive feeling that gay people lived more freely in an urban environment. I think that gay people, if they are reasonably alert, have a sense of this. You head for an urban environment because it provides more variety, tolerance and anonymity."

"[When in college] I met some older gay men who tried without any great resistance on my part, to seduce me. But my first encounters with gay people were not particularly rewarding. The first gay bar I went to was pretty raunchy. I was even shocked at the language people used. It almost amounted to a kind of aversion therapy; it really shook me up. I found the bar, but I don't remember how. It wasn't listed in any directory, that's for sure!" Charles also remembers meeting gay men in a second-hand bookstore in the Copley Square section of Boston.

Sheri, Tony and Charles all served in the armed forces — Tony and Charles during WWII and Sheri in the early to mid '50s. For Tony, it was an enlightening experience although he had only one brief gay sexual encounter. He mentions the fear that imprisonment or discharge conjured up if you should be caught. This fear was a factor in him not seeing more when in the service. Charles also had a few brief encounters and recalls, "I did know gay people in the army but didn't find out until later that they were gay."

While we were not doing something every minute, they didn't leave us a lot of time for existential brooding, either. There were chances to do things. However, I was pretty young, naive and repressed and probably wasn't aware of a lot that went on. The few brief encounters that I did have suggested a lot went on."

For Sheri, the opportunities were numerous but she felt that the risks varied. "We lived constantly under the threat of being court-martialed. I was caught on more than one occasion. But there were 270 of us and 200 of us were gay. It would have been very difficult to purge our outfit. It would have been embarrassing if there was a purge. I was caught on more than one occasion, but I was always caught by another lesbian."

But there were risks. "One night I was in Ft. Dix and there was a big thing going on. People running around and yelling and screaming at one another. What had happened was the the company NCO barged into a room and caught two women in bed. That's all you need in the army is to be caught in bed. They were court-martialed."

After You're Out

Coming out, of course, was a major life event for many gays of the '40s and '50s. For some, it was a relief from the loneliness which they had felt up to this point and it also enriched their lives. Mary says, "With the exception of a teacher I had had, [my first lover] was the first woman I could really relate to. The relationship on many levels was to me so gratifying because I really had a lot of doubts. At that point in my life, it was a salvation for me because I was beginning to feel really desperate. I found myself talking to her about things that were really vital. And this had been the burden — that there had been no one to talk to. This relationship lasted 4 years and was a very fine and fortunate one for me. We're still friends (after 30 years) and that says something."

The relief came with knowing that it was possible to have a full and satisfying relationship and also with being able to finally put to rest the question of whether one should ignore one's feelings and simply lead a straight life, perhaps even marry. Again, Mary comments, "That was put to rest for all time. I felt then, that's just not for me. It was a conflict I had had, being ambivalent, switching my thinking. It was gone and I felt comfortable with that."

Coming out also meant changes in terms of where and with whom one socialized. But the choices back then were more limited than they are today. For the most part, socializing meant going to one of a limited number of bars or spending time with a small, usually closed, group of friends. The friendship groups tended to be small because of the difficulty in identifying other gays. Mary recalls, "There wasn't that easy kind of flow that I have in my life now. You meet [gay] people and you don't even think about it."

The women I spoke with travelled in small circles. Lois and her first lover did not know any other lesbians. "I spent a lot of my life going to gay male parties and being the only woman there. Neither [my lover] nor I drank and we wouldn't go near the bars. She and I lived very much in an ivory tower. We used to have parties and we had gay men over but we didn't have any women over. We didn't know any and we didn't dare look for any."

While Mary's circle wasn't much larger, it was entirely women. "[My first lover] had a group of friends and I didn't know anybody. But then I started meeting people through her. [But the circle] was about 10 people at most. The social activities were pretty minimal. Most of the couples I knew were pretty isolated. That was the real problem. . . . And this was one of the critical points. It was very hard for people to get to know another person that they liked and they wanted to sleep with. And [when they finally found somebody] they weren't about to risk losing them. There was a lot of jealousy and a real apprehension. And I can understand that now."

But Charles had a different experience and recalls, "There was a group of us who met every Saturday night in the chess room of the Hotel Touraine." Charles also had a number of friends in New York City with whom he has maintained long-standing ties. For a number of years, Charles spent almost every weekend in New York.

Although the bars were not a major feature in the lives of any of the gays/lesbians I talked with, it is true that everybody had something to say about them. This is because even for people who did not go to bars often, they were still important. Charles says, "Bars have been a feature of gay life for as long as I can remember." For one thing, they were perhaps the first public institutions where gays could meet other gays. For all the negative aspects, it still is important to remember what they provided to people who might otherwise have been isolated. There were spaces where gays no longer had to spend enormous energy in feeling another person out, trying to figure if she/he might be gay.

Mary talks about it this way, "[Outside of the bars] you'd have to [meet other lesbians] by intuition and verbal skirmishing. The energy that went into it was phenomenal. You'd suspect. Sometimes it would take a long time before it would come out. [Then] you'd breathe a sigh of relief and say, 'Oh, now I can talk to this person.' I guess the comforting part of going to the bars was knowing that you didn't have to go through all of those games."

Of the bar scene in Boston in the '40s and '50s, both Tony and Charles noted that they tended to attract clientele from similar socioeconomic levels. There was Playland, a "working class" bar; the Hotel Touraine, a "middle class" bar; The Silver Dollar and the Punch Bowl which

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Music

Sinking His Teeth Into It



Aubry standing over a reviving Lord Ruthven (Vampire)

Tales of the Vampyre

Music by Heinrich A. Marschner
Libretto by W. A. Wohlbrueck

English version by John Moriarty
Conducted by William Brad Scott
Staged by Lisi Oliver

With Brent Ellis, James Atherton, Pamela Kucenic, Jan Curtis and Linda Wall.

By Michael Bronski

Tales of the Vampyre, a once popular though now rarely performed work, is certainly not grand opera. It is, rather, obvious melodrama and gothic conceits, and it's sprightly score may make it more enjoyable to a "knowing" audience nowadays, then one, say, thirty years ago.

Pauline Kael once remarked that once you saw the Marx Brothers slaughter *Il Trevatore* in *A Night At The Opera* you would never be able to sit through the real thing with a straight face

again. Watching the Opera Company of Boston's Halloween presentation makes you understand, more fully, the conventions of the nineteenth-century opera and how easily they lend themselves to parody.

Although the opera itself may lack some bite, the staging and sets of this production take advantage of the work's limitations. This staging manages to extend the production to playable parody without ever losing musical integrity.

Based on several popular plays (whose original source was John Polidori's *The Vampyre*) *Tales of the Vampyre* combines the supernatural elements with the standard theme of friendship and honor that shape so many other operas. Lord Ruthven (the vampire) must kill three brides in twenty four hours to extend his

life on earth. Discovered in the midst of the first murder by his old friend Aubry, Ruthven demands his friend to repay an old debt by keeping silence for twenty four hours. Things become complicated when Aubry's beloved — Malvina — is suddenly engaged to Ruthven by her father. Will love or friendship win out?

In order to put some new blood into a somewhat tired piece, Lisi Oliver and set designers Herbert Senn and Helen Pond have created a visual feast that is closer to 1935 Hollywood then to *grande guignol*. The graveyard scenes are eerily lit with much fog pouring all over the stage (and to the dismay of my contacts, the first five rows). Bats fly into the audience and hot white lightning cracks across the stage. (The special effects are by Chic Sliber who worked on the Edward Gorey production of *Dracula*.) Lord Ruthven skulks around in an imposing black cape with mauve lining, lurking behind arches and drifting through fog. The set changes are in audience view, in half light, by a stage crew who act like left-overs from *The Night of the Living Dead*.

Marschner's score for *Tales of the Vampyre* is not at all bad. It is firmly rooted in the musical conventions of its time and never really transcends them, unlike the works of Weber, for example. As a result, one has the feeling of hearing it all before, though most of it remains quite pleasant. There is a wonderful aria sung by Ruthven in act two describing the horror of being a vampire. Unfortunately this high is quickly followed by a very long, slow moving piece by Aubry about his moral decision. (I imagine it's impossible to set a moral decision to really interesting music.)

There is some very nice ensemble work for the peasants to sing, and some interminable comic relief (peasants again) that could easily be cut from the second act. The English lyrics are, for the most part, quite fluid and graceful, although at times smack of the naivete that you come to expect of English sung opera.

The singing was all generally top form. Brent Ellis was a quite imposing Ruthven. A departure from the thin, dry Draculas of Lugosi or Christopher Lee, he is full-blooded and very sexy. (He'd look great in leather and would be perfect if they ever made an opera from *Cruising*). Linda Wall, as Emmy Perth — his second victim — sang a beautiful ballad at the beginning of act two (one of the few pieces of music that could stand on its own today). She also sang a realistically sexy and frightening duet with Ellis as he is se-

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Recovering From Halloween

By Dot Turnier

Halloween has never been one of my favorite holidays. As a matter of fact, it ranks right down there with Patriots day (a holiday commemorating the evacuation of the British naval forces from Boston harbor during the American Revolution). When I first came to Boston, I couldn't understand why a state would declare a holiday in honor of their football team.

It takes an act of a Democratic Congress to get me dressed up on Halloween. I always figure that people are generally in disguise anyway. On Halloween people just put costumes over their disguises.

I spent Halloween in a local gay bar. It was a psychiatrist's dream. Sometimes I wonder if people use Halloween costumes as a way of letting out their true inner selves. As a kid, I always wanted to dress up as a man for Halloween. I can't do that anymore and go into a gay bar; someone might not know I'm in costume.

Halloween brings out witches and devils and all sorts of other ungodly creatures. One might wonder why someone chooses to wear the costume they do. Is the witch an expression of her true self? Is this a side of her that only comes out once a year? On this one night a year she can act like a witch and no one can get mad at her for it. The same with the devil, or the devil's lover ("The devil made me do it"). I have always wanted to see a devil's lover dressed as the deep blue sea — see, even I have my little quirks.

There are those who are only two steps behind me in declaring

Halloween unfit for human consumption. These are the people who get their costumes out of their laundry bag. That is, what they wear is whatever happens to be clean on that day as long as it does not match. Someone might say, "I think this year I'll wear my lavender (it's "in" this year, you know) shorts and my bright blue sweater. Over that I'll put on my torn gray sweatshirt that I wore playing football last week and hope I smell enough so no one comes up and asks me what I am supposed to be."

For those who find even this too much trouble, but refuse to be clumped in with us party poopers (that's poopers, not poppers), there is another alternative. Hats always save the day. Dress as you normally do, and hope no one thinks it's your costume. Add to this an outlandish hat. Something from "Star Wars" is preferable. Cowboy hats are "out" in a gay bar — too stylish. If you really want to be accepted, throw a couple of streaks of makeup on too.

Not only have I disliked Halloween because I don't want to get dressed up but also I hate it because it is a dangerous time to meet people. Before you go up and say to someone, "Hey, I like your costume" (the perfect ice-breaker), you better make sure they have one on (or the perfect headbreaker).

If you, too, should at some time choose to be a Halloween hater, you must prepare yourself for some resistance. Just remember, when someone comes up to you in full costume and says, "Where's your costume?" all you have to answer is, "Where's yours?"



Susan Fleischmann

Television

Being Gay on TV

Gay In Boston

WBZ-TV Channel 4 Boston
With Charles Austin
October 27-31, 11:00 pm

By Joellen Mancuso, Lagma

Last week on Channel 4's 11:00 news there was a week-long special report produced by Charles Austin, called "Gay in Boston." Charles, who has been sympathetic to the concerns of gays and lesbians in the past, decided to help break down stereotypes and do some consciousness raising. In order to do that, he consulted with Lesbian and Gay Media Advocates

(Lagma) members to find four lesbians and gays with ordinary jobs and the willingness to risk coming out publicly. The interviews were extremely short due to time restrictions, but everyone made at least one salient point.

Brooks Solewater, a lesbian who delivers the Boston *Globe* and is beginning a career in sales, said that she wished it were possible for us to come out to the people with whom we live and work. "They know us and like us now, why should this change when they find out we're gay?"

Eric Rofes who is a teacher, respectfully corrected Charles for

using the word "admit" (as in, "admit to being gay"). Eric talked about how he is able to be extremely sensitive to the needs of his students because he has learned a lot from the experiences of being gay and having to cope with society.

Cindy Rizzo, a legal aide who is preparing to be a lawyer, confirmed that there is, in fact, illegal discrimination against gays and lesbians.

Tom Morganti, a building superintendent, described his dismay at being harassed in the neighborhood where he lives and works. This is a neighborhood

which is predominantly gay.

The people interviewed were articulate and had a good T.V. presence. Also, Charles Austin successfully edited and juxtaposed interview segments to show a strong argument for tolerance and respect for gays. A major fault in the program was that it was heavily male oriented. Interviews and scenes at Buddies (a Boston bar) predominated opening and closing segments. There could have been a lot more women (or would we have co-operated in allowing that?).

Overall, Charles Austin presented a strong positive picture. If

you saw the series, let him know you appreciated it. Address all letters to: WBZ-TV 4, 1170 Soldiers Field Road, Boston, MA 02134.

A program will appear on WGBH Channel 2 on Thursday, November 13 at 8:30 p.m. On the series premiere of The Tom Cottle Show entitled "Ben and Robin", one gay and one lesbian 20-year-old will talk about dealing with their gayness as young teens in suburban Boston.

Poetry

Poetry Evening: Good But Too Long



Carolyn Johnson and Hattie Gossett

An Evening of Poetry and Music
Music by Bougainvillea

Poetry by Carolyn Johnson,
Hattie Gossett, Donna Kate
Rushin, and Andre Lorde
By Robin White

The lesbian and gay community was invited to attend an evening of poetry and music at the Y.M.C.A. on Clarendon Street in Boston on Friday, October 31 (Halloween). As I enjoy events like this one, I decided to attend.

I arrived to find a more than capacity crowd filling the auditorium. There were people of all sizes, shapes, colors and many, in keeping with the holiday tradition, were in costume. The evening seemed promising, but got off to a late beginning. Our emcee for the evening was Demita Frazier.

First to entertain us was Bougainvillea, a women's jazz quintet. Even though they set the mood for the program (the audi-

ence was rocking and swaying to their wonderful sounds) they entertained us for too long. Soon the rocking turned to restlessness.

After Bougainvillea completed their set, we were invited by Demita Frazier to join in an "invocation of the spirits." I am sure that moment of silence touched everyone present. For the next half an hour we were delighted by the poetry of Carolyn Johnson and Hattie Gossett. Hattie inspired us by giving new meaning to "The Dozens" — a way people of Black culture have of humorously insulting each other.

On the more serious side, Carolyn read, "Letter To My Father" in which she comes to terms with how she feels about him. Carolyn and Hattie read, "Notice to the Governments of the World" in which they stated that women are tired of being treated poorly and being stepped

on. Women, from now on, should be treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. They also stated that as child bearers, if their demands were not met, they would simply stop working and would no longer bear children for the government's military gains, because "Our wombs are not government property any longer." For all that the women have done, "We want cash retroactively and we want it all now."

Donna Kate Rushin continued the evening with some of her poetry. To me, the most memorable was, "In Answer To The Question, Have You Ever Considered Suicide?" The answer went something like this: "girl, are you crazy . . ." At the end of this she said (and I might say that this struck home with me) "if you ever find me laying up somewhere, don't let them tell you it was suicide 'cause it was not." When Rushin left the stage, the audience gave her a standing ovation and did not stop clapping until she returned to give us an encore reading of her poetry.

When Audre Lorde finally came to entertain us, she was wonderful. I can't think of enough words to describe my feeling as she spoke. I sat listening to this woman, my mother's age, spinning tales of young love. I felt like a kid again.

The stories that she read, as only she can do, were from an unfinished book called, *I've Been Standing On This Street Corner A Hell Of A Long Time*. To say the least, I was captivated, but after two stories Audre Lorde was gone. Some things you never can get

enough of. Audre is one of them.

Carolyn and Hattie came back to perform a poem about Billie Holiday, enchanting us once more with their talent and humor. Then Donna Kate Rushin returned with a poem from the book *This Bridge Called My Back*. She announced that she was "sick of this shit, sick of being the sole Black friend to thirty-four individual women." She added that she was tired of being the intermediary between everyone, and that she no longer would be the "bridge." In order for her "bridge" to be useful, "the bridge it must be is the bridge to my own power. I must be the bridge to nowhere but my true self. Then I will be useful."

As promised earlier, Bougainvillea returned to play to a very tired audience. By this time the auditorium was beginning to empty. The program was three hours long and became very monotonous.

The set-up of the program could have been more varied. The sound system wasn't too hot either. Voices through the microphones (when used) were barely audible. There was no seating for the hard-of-hearing. The building was also not wheelchair accessible, and there was no signing for the deaf. It is unfortunate that the evening was not more carefully planned to include such major parts of our community.

The event was coordinated by Clover Change, Kate Gyllensvard, Rick Cotroneo, Maria Erlien, Beth Ginga, Michael Glover, Stephen Katz and Barbara Smith. The money which is left over will benefit a Black women's resource and the new loft at 22 Randolph St. which will produce theatre, poetry, art and music by and for lesbians and gay men.



Audre Lorde

Gish

Continued from Page 3
the prudent caution recommended by the superintendent was frivolous or otherwise inappropriate."

Errickson found that Gish had engaged in "conduct unbecoming to a teacher" because the publicity around Gish's activism could cause parents to "worry about the psychological effects on their children." He further found that the publicity around Gish's activism could "threaten . . . the orderly operation of the school" and of Gish's classroom.

Ironically, Vincent Perna noted, "In the entire six or seven years of this battle, we have heard no concern from [parents in] the community about John's negative effect in the classroom."

Gish's behavior in the classroom was not criticized in any of either Burke's or Errickson's findings. On the contrary, Errickson found "there is no convincing evidence in the record that respondent's performance as an English teacher from 1965-1972 was less

than satisfactory, nor is he charged with unsatisfactory work performance."

Further, Errickson's decision notes, "The record is barren of evidence that respondent ever discussed [with any students at Paramus High School] either his own sexual preferences, his viewpoint or advocacy of alternative lifestyles or the rights or problems of gays in society."

Perna told *GCN* that "not a part of the decision is based on fact. Gish was dismissed because he was potentially dangerous." Gish's disregard of his superior's orders has not even been found sufficient justification to find him guilty of willful insubordination," Perna said.

The next stage in the appeal process of John Gish's case is the New Jersey Appellate Court. Oxford plans to place an appeal with the appellate division before Dec. 1. He estimates that a decision from that court will probably take several months.

Marschner's music is richly romantic (bordering on parody itself at times). It could conceivably make a good opera if the book kept to the emotional *liebes-tod* of vampires and didn't dabble in nineteenth century codes of honor and friendship. But despite this, *Tales of the Vampyre* is a nicely mounted, enjoyable evening. It's refreshing to see that opera can be done seriously, without losing a sense of humor about it.

The Opera Company of Boston staged only two performances of *Tales of the Vampyre* — on the evening of October 31 and November 1 at The Operahouse.

Mass. Races

Continued from Page 3

8, No. 9). He defeated Republican challenger William Sawyer in the general election.

In the Massachusetts Senate, only 11 of the 40 seats were contested.

In a close race, George Bachrach, an independent who has pledged to support gay and lesbian rights and was endorsed by the MWPC and CPPAX, defeated incumbent Democrat Francis McCann. McCann had held the seat since 1955.

Bachrach told *GCN*, "The message (of the election) is not so much an ideological one as it is a sense of frustration with the malfunctioning of government. The government is costing the taxpayers a great deal and providing them with very little. It's not so much a question of whether it's liberal programs or conservative programs, it's a question of competence in the government."

'Disaster'

Continued from Page 7

[Sen. George] McGovern for a while and I liked some of his ideas, but his office was run like the Mafia. We need some housecleaning in government, some real liberals with new ideas."

"If we ever have fascism in this country, it will be under old liberals. We have a healthy fear of the man on horseback — a right-wing dictatorship by a great public figure. I don't see Reagan as a danger for that reason. No, I see a popular liberal like [Sen. Edward] Kennedy co-opting our slow move to the left. Reagan may slow inflation, but unemployment will rise. He'll be voted out and I'm afraid we'll get Kennedy."

Steve Schoonmaker of the Expansionist Party is "delighted." He believes that Reagan will make

Bachrach added, "I like to think that there has been a response to the message (of my campaign) and it has been a progressive message. At the same time I think the major concern out there is that we just get the government to work."

In the Massachusetts House of Representatives, 72 seats were contested out of 160.

In Boston's eighth suffolk district, Democrat Thomas Valley easily defeated Republican James McDonald. Both candidates actively sought the votes of the large lesbian and gay community in the district (see *GCN*, Vol. 8, No. 15).

Valley told *GCN*, "The Reagan victory is clearly a question of economics. This is not to discount the Moral Majority, which obviously gave him his base and his ideology and his 39 per cent. But for him to get 51 per cent was a repudiation of Carter economics."

Valley said Reagan's victory will not precipitate a reactionary trend in Massachusetts government and therefore will not affect state lesbian and gay rights bills.

"I do not immediately think that there is a problem defending people's rights in the Massachusetts legislature at this point. . . . People are angry about money. That's it."

Valley added that the defeat of Jimmy Carter and other Democrats will force changes in the Democratic Party. "I am in the defining stages of the new Democratic Party," he said. "There's going to have to be a new set of ideas. I want to work on those ideas. . . . The New Deal ideas are obviously worn out. They're obviously not attracting popular support. . . . Liberal Democrats have a responsibility to make a liberal Democratic agenda acceptable to the voters."

In Boston's eighteenth Suffolk district, another supporter of lesbian and gay rights, Thomas Gallagher, defeated incumbent John Mellia in the Democratic primary and ran unopposed in the general election. Gallagher was endorsed by MWPC and CPPAX. Mellia, who had held the position since 1965, consistently voted against lesbian and gay rights bills.

Opera

Continued from Page 10

ducing her. As the virtuous Malvina, Pamala Kucenic makes a good try, but the part is so badly conceived and written that it is an uphill struggle. This is one of the most thankless roles for sopranos; frilly arias with no dramatic import or energy.

If there is any one problem with *Tales of the Vampyre*, it is with the script. Vampire legends are potent, emotional stuff. (*Sweeney Todd* makes all the blood and lust work very well on stage.) Ruthven's opening aria has great potential to be both sexual, alluring and scary. When the friendship oath plot takes over, the opera becomes dated and silly. That is why it needs the infusion of self-parody to keep going.

Alfred Corn,
author of
Various Light,

will read on Friday,
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of author's book
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PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Almost 100 years after universal acceptance of the germ theory of disease, it is appalling that every individual is still not being taught the significance of the role of personal hygiene in the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

Current attitudes (including group male-female and same-sex activities) require that each participant wash away those acquired and one's own germs and secretions, before and after sex contact, in protection of one's self and of one's sex partner(s).

An important health factor is remembering the lower digestive tract as a source of infectious germs including those which may cause non-gonococcal urethritis in the male and vaginitis in the female. Here are some highlights from our widely acclaimed booklet (Available in Spanish; soon in Japanese) —

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PAGE 2: THE SEXUALLY ACTIVE MALE

Careful washing after sex will reduce the possibility of catching VD. The germs that cause syphilis and gonorrhea, as well as some other sexually transmitted diseases, are sensitive to soap and water.

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Soap genitals working a bit of soft mushy soap into urinary opening.

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Then urinate (which may sting).

Extended exposure or delay before washing diminishes the effectiveness of this preventive measure. Washing is doubly important since even in the absence of syphilis and gonorrhea, other sexually transmitted germs can cause infections such as NGU (non-gonococcal urethritis) or NSU (non-specific urethritis).

If lubricants are involved in the sex act, use watersoluble preparations that will wash away. Do not use an oil base that will leave a film to trap the germs.

NOTE: The foreskin that covers the head of the penis may trap germs which can cause infections. Therefore, special attention should be given to washing the uncircumcised penis.

When vaccines against gonorrhea and syphilis will have been developed, personal hygiene will remain necessary to prevent other sexually transmitted diseases. For example: A gonorrhea vaccine will not prevent approximately half of the reported cases of male urethritis which are not gonorrhea.

PAGE 3: SOME ASPECTS OF PERSONAL HYGIENE FOR MALE AND FEMALE

Infectious germs which are always found in the lower digestive tract may be transmitted from the rectum during certain sex activities. Among the dangerous germs present may be the virus which causes hepatitis, and parasites which cause gastrointestinal disorders if they enter the mouth (anal-oral route).

The mucous membranes of the genito-urinary system are highly susceptible to infection by some of these germs from the rectum. For example: As a result of careless wiping from rectum toward vagina by the female after toilet, germs are easily spread to the vagina where they may cause infections, and from which they may be transmitted during vaginal, as well as rectal, intercourse. Therefore, females must not wipe in the direction of rectum to vagina.

Personal hygiene before and after sex can be greatly aided by the bidet, a low bathroom fixture, designed to facilitate washing for disease prevention and proper cleansing after toilet. Not everyone, unfortunately, has been adequately informed as to the advantages of the bidet; it is not found, for instance, in homes or hotels in the United States, whereas in many parts of the world it is widely used and significant to personal hygiene. Good hygiene requires careful washing of genital and rectal areas before and after sex.

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Voices in the Night chapter 2

By Andrea Loewenstein
with thanks to Michael Bronski,
consultant

(In Chapter One, we met Ann Morganthal, a lesbian writer and teacher. While walking home from her teaching job at a local adult education center, Ann is harassed by a group of teenagers. She is unable to write because of this incident and because of an angry note which she received from her lover, Bell, who has been attacked by the same group earlier in the day. Bell is also upset because of Ann's involvement with another woman. As we last saw Ann, she has just agreed to attend a self-protection meeting at the apartment of Manny Brighton, a Brimpton Street neighbor.)

As Manny Brighton frantically tried to pick up a few things (after all, people were coming, he didn't want the place to be a complete mess) he did his best to ignore the railings of his lover, David, who was following him around complaining.

"What I just can't believe is how you could go ahead and do this without even consulting me! I mean it wasn't even you who got mugged in the first place, it was me. You'd think you'd at least let me decide what to do about it. And now you expect me to play hostess to this bunch of complete strangers when you know I have a class to prepare. I can just see all the weirdos in the neighborhood tramping up these stairs. Why didn't you just put up a sign: 'Queers live here,' and leave it at that."

Manny shouted over the noise of the carpetsweeper. "Of course I consulted you, we talked about it for three hours last night, in case you forgot. And your solution was to move away."

"Yes, and your solution was to invite a bunch of wino dykes and leather queens up here to play 'ain't it awful' and to run around cleaning a perfectly clean apartment as if the Duchess of Kent were coming to tea! Or is there someone special you want to make a good impression on, by any remote chance? Maybe that tired old leather number you couldn't take your eyes off in the bar the other night, hmm? Maybe he could bring his set of whips and whatever other cute little toys these people use, and set up guard in front of our building? And that way, when I go off to school, you can have him in for a quicky — that is if a quicky's possible, with all that apparatus to plug in and arrange, and put on. All I can say is, the news of this little gathering of yours better not get to any of my colleagues."

"Oh come off it, Dave. Your precious 'colleagues' may be a little slow, but they do have eyes. And so do those too, too macho little boys who jam into your office during your hours. Funny, I've never heard you mention any

female students coming in for those long tutorials or whatever you call them!"

"Listen, how many times do I have to tell you, being who you are is a whole different thing than stuffing it down their throats. I mean, don't join academia if you aren't willing to play it their way. That's the only reason what's her face, Sally Lionheart or whatever ridiculous name she took, got fired. By plastering her name all over town as part of that dyke group, she wasn't giving them any choice. That's what I can't stand about women, they just don't have any subtlety."

The doorbell rang. "Please, Dave," Manny prayed as he went downstairs to let them in. "You don't have to be nice, just at least be civil."

Twenty minutes later, Manny had to laugh at his own fears as he watched Dave charm Ann Morganthal, who had come in the door as if she expected something to jump out at her. Dave had grabbed her hand and was smiling at her with that look of his. It was a look which always made people feel like they were the only one in the room, maybe in the whole world.

"It's a terrible life, being a teacher, isn't it?" Manny heard him say. "It's like having all these children one's responsible for but of course one has to let them go."

"Children, huh," said the heavy older woman whom Manny knew from the corner bar, and who turned out to be one of Ann's students.

The woman seemed more than a little drunk, and had insisted on bringing her big, smelly dog up with her. It wasn't a stupid dog, though, Manny thought, because the minute Sam had come in the door in his boots, tight jeans and leather jacket, the dog had gone straight over to him and laid its head between his spread legs. In fact, Manny found himself envying the dog, whose large grizzled head Sam was kneading with his hands as he talked.

"We had this kind of problem one time in New York when I lived there," Sam said, in his deep scratchy voice. "What we did, we organized patrols. I mean, you get a few guys out there who are gonna be willing to just grab up these punks by the collar and maybe slap 'em around a little bit. They'll realize right away that their shit isn't gonna be tolerated."

Manny suddenly imagined himself being grabbed up by those rough, hard hands and slapped around a little. Then lowered down, Sam leaning over him. . . .

"The thing is, we don't want to alienate people." That was the young black architect with the "very Harvard" voice. "Perhaps other means of negotiation."

"Negotiation, bullshit!" That was the dog's owner. "I hope one of them does try something on me,

I'll be out there smashing heads with the best of 'em. You shoulda known me in the old days, no one put nothing over on Josie Mac-Millan. They used to call me fightin' Jo 'cause of all the shit I used to get into!"

A little more than an hour later, the meeting was over. It had ended as inconclusively, Manny thought, as most meetings did. They had agreed to carry whistles, to be on the look-out for each other, to consider Sam's suggestion, and to publicize their next meeting. And the group had a name: the Brimpton Street Self-Protection Association, or the BSSPA. Ann had made a phone call which seemed to consist of a lot of listening, with an occasional, "I'm sorry" or "Yeah, I see." Then she had hung up and left in a hurry, the others following her. Only Sam remained, and Manny walked him down, wondering just how obvious he had been. At the bottom of the stairs, in the hallway near the door, he found out.

Sam, who'd hardly looked at him directly all evening, suddenly turned to face him, grabbing his shoulders, and looking directly into Manny's face with his dark blue eyes. Manny felt an electric charge go through him and had trouble not looking away from that challenging, slightly cruel stare. After what seemed like ten minutes, but was probably one, Sam spoke.

"Look, I think you're real hot," he said. "I don't know what kind of scenes you're into, but a few of us are doing a little partying Friday night, up at my place. Like to see you there." He gave Manny a little push, so that he was up against the wall, shaking. Then, suddenly, quickly, he ran his hand down Manny's belly, to his crotch. "But leave the professor home, OK?" he said, and was gone, out into the dark Brimpton Street night.

Reactions

continued from page 11

the U.S. the supreme world power again, thereby safeguarding "the few popular governments remaining." He's satisfied that abortion will be outlawed at long last, and glad to pronounce the feminist movement "wiped out."

However, most lesbians and gay men see a different silver lining to the approaching thunderhead. They are saying, maybe the current situation will abruptly awaken the many somnambulant radicals of the seventies, who were lulled by the seeming innocuousness of Jerry Ford and Jimmy Carter.

"If you have no one to fight against, it's hard to organize. You need an ogre," says Elaine Noble, ex-state representative from Boston. "Richard Nixon did a lot for the left, just as Anita Bryant helped solidify and organize gays in this country."

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Coming Out

Continued from Page 9

were mixed; and the Napoleon which attracted what was then referred to as the "piss elegant" crowd.

As Charles recalls it, a good cruising spot after the bars closed on a Saturday night was a cafeteria known jokingly amongst the gay crowd as "The Last Chance Cafe." Charles also sees some differences in the present day atmosphere of the bars, and he feels that there is now a little more interchange among the different groups.

But the bar scene for women seems to have been different than for the men. While Mary has already described the relief one would feel in being in a roomful of lesbians, she also describes the negative aspects which left many women feeling ambivalent and some feeling distaste. "I remember," says Mary, "one day a friend of mine told me that there was a new bar (in Boston). Well, this was a great discovery back then because there were so few of them around (for women). It was seamy back 20, 25 years ago. They were terrible places and we weren't exactly greeted with open arms. We were being given a big favor by getting a place from them. The one we often went to was a men's bar upstairs and woman's bar downstairs. What does that tell you?"

Mary also recalls some feelings she had in being in those bars. "I'll never forget the first time I went to the Ace of Spades — it's the Pied Piper in Provincetown now. You had to sign a book at that time in order to get in. They could keep men out back then by having you sign this book. Of course, *nobody* would sign their real name." And Mary reflects, "That thing about lying to yourself, especially right there. It's indicative of how the whole culture was for us."

The women I spoke with also reflected on what was a more prominent part of the scene back then which had to do with butch/fem relationships. Mary remembers, "I saw a lot of (butch/fem) in those days. A butch would come over and ask a fem to dance. It seemed to me to be an extension of heterosexuality. All the mannerisms, the protective kinds of things. In fact, it seemed a satirical kind of presentation. But I'm much more tolerant now than I was then. I don't make judgments

like I did and I feel that people have a right to whatever kind of expression they may find. I still feel it's limiting. But I don't feel upset or judgmental about it."

Sheri, a self described butch (and "cute as a little button" adds her lover) felt that she was not role playing but was in fact just being herself. Others believe that lesbians involved in these relationships were, in effect, announcing their love publicly and were therefore amongst the bravest and most integrative women of their times.

The amount of contact between lesbians and gay men in the '40s and '50s varied from person to person. But my sense is that the amount of contact a given individual had with opposite sex gays was serendipitous. Without the political and social organizations that we have today, lesbians and gay men weren't always able to make choices about whether or how much they would intermingle. Mary recalls, "I've known only 3 or 4 gay men and I haven't had very many gay men friends. It just worked out that way (because) I was never involved in the clubs. But I'm sure if I had been, I would have met men that I liked."

In contrast, Charles says, "I had met some lesbians (mostly through a circle of friends in N.Y.). So they weren't an altogether strange breed to me like they were to many of my friends."

Mary had a small, tightly knit circle of lesbian friends. "(Before my first relationship) I didn't know anybody and that had been a source of great anxiety for me." But then Mary met her lover's friends. "(There) was about 10 people (in that group). The social activities were pretty minimal. Most of the couples I knew were pretty isolated. That was a real problem." Mary describes the way in which women met other women. "There used to be a woman's network. There were arrangements between people, like if you knew somebody was free and somebody else needed somebody, you would introduce them."

Conclusion

It seems then, that life in the '40s and '50s, even after a person was out, had its limitations. There were not many places for gay people to gather. The places that were available were often under the control of non-gays and were subject to harassment. Although it was an ever present threat, none

of the people to whom I spoke were ever in a bar that was raided.

People tended to move within smaller circles and were generally more isolated. But these people did offer solace and support to one another so that everybody could continue to operate reasonably within the bounds of straight society. Several people, with whom I spoke, mentioned how fragmented their lives were. For example, Charles Ash thinks that his need to keep his social life separate from his professional life cost him in his career advancement.

Also, gay people still lacked any coherent way of communicating among themselves. As Mary points out, "If somebody went to New York and got a gay paper with gay news and brought it back, that thing would be passed around. Everybody would read it; it was a big deal because there was hardly ever anything in print. (This happened, even though) they were real rag sheets, really bad journalism." As gay people slowly began to form groups and congregate in public places like the bars, a growing awareness took hold of the need for other places to which anybody could come, which would not be controlled by outsiders. Tony was involved in the Mattachine Society in Boston while Lois and Sheri began putting their energies into the Daughters of Bilitis. These groups, along with others, played an important role in improving life for gays/lesbians, including those of us who would come later.

In thinking about what Mary, Lois, Sheri, Charles and Tony told me of their experiences, I felt that conditions were worse then than they are now. However, one reason we can understand these experiences so readily is that most of us, regardless of our age, have also had similar experiences. Things certainly have improved, but we still face situations where we read prejudicial statements, and hear slurs against us. Many of us still move to the cities to be near other lesbians and gays who are identifiable. People still lose their jobs, their children and sometimes their lives. But there are also more victories now and more inroads being made all the time. It is easier to meet other lesbians and gays now and to see that we have good reason to be proud of one another. That after all, has been our goal all along.

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WRITING WOMEN!!

MAENAD, a women's literary journal soliciting manuscripts and visual art by feminist women. Fiction, theory, analysis, reviews. 15 typed pgs. max. Visual art send B&W photos. SASE. Paula Estey, PO Box 738, Gloucester, MA 01930. (17 x3)

NEW FEMINIST QUARTERLY OF PROSE AND VISUAL ART *Maenad*, a women's journal available by single copy, \$3.50 pp or one year sub (4 issues) \$12 pp. Fall issue premiere with Marge Piercy. Winter issue available Dec 30. Send check to Maenad, PO Box 738, Gloucester, MA 01930. Makes a great gift! (17 x 3)

Guardian, Independent radical news-weekly, covers black, women's, gay struggles and liberation movements around the world. Special offer: six weeks for \$1. Guardian, Dept. GCN, 33 W. 17 St., NYC, NY 10011. (c)

FOCUS

Focus: a bi-monthly journal for lesbians, \$8.00 per year, \$1.35 per individual copy. 1151 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138. Publishes fiction, poetry, reviews, essays, graphics. Editorial meetings first Monday of every other month (Apr, June, etc.) at 8pm. Call 259-0063 for info. We need writers and production people. A good place to learn how to put a magazine together.

HOW GAY IS YOUR LIBRARY?

Pamphlet of tips for non-librarians on how to get gay materials into libraries, available from the Gay Task Force of the American Library Association. "Censored, Ignored, Overlooked, Too Expensive? How to Get Gay Materials into Libraries" explains library selection policies in a general way, and tells how you can get a library to buy more gay books & periodicals. Also tells what to do if library refuses your request; why gay bks are sometimes kept where you have to ask for them; & how to donate materials to the library. \$1 to Barbara Gittings — GTF, P.O. Box 2383, Phila., PA 19103. Bkstore & bulk order discount available. More info: Barbara Gittings (215) 382-3222. (c)

Prisoners



support gay prisoners
read and answer
our prisoner
penpals in the classifieds

Does anyone care about us gays? We have feelings too! We need companionship and love too. I will answer all who write me. Lary BEERLI, A-310, Box 87-N2-1-32 (MPC), Menard, IL 62259. (16)

Would like to meet gentle and understanding males who care and want to help. I enjoy music, swimming, riding, exploring and meeting new people. CHARLES W. SANDERS, #036774, 21-2212, P.O. Box 747, Starke, FL 32091 (17)

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

A Prison Project is now being formed to support GCN in its long-standing effort to get free subscriptions to the paper in to lesbian and gay prisoners and also to get books for them to read and penpals to write to. (Every other week there is a prisoner penpal list on the Classifieds page.) Volunteer help is always appreciated in this and other parts of the project (including doing outreach to women prisoners and researching and informing prisoners of their mailroom and visiting rights). if you can help with your time or a contribution, it will be much appreciated. Thank you.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Gay male would like to receive mail from anyone who wishes to write. DWAYNE L. COZZOLI #138-494 P.O. Box 69, London, OH 73140 (17)

Single male would like to correspond with other males who are looking for a meaningful relationship. Will be out soon. Please send photo and details to: MICHAEL PAUL LA MADLINE #038696/cellW2N4 P.O. Box 747, Starke, FL 32091 (17)

I am interested in writing to down to earth people. Must be looking for a lasting friendship. HOWARD E. CUDE 268663, Ellis Unit-H19, Huntsville, TX 77340 (17)

Lonely male prisoner seeks your love and understanding. Please write soon and thanks! TOM ISABELLA #148-833, P.O. Box 57, Marlon, OH 43302 (17)

Gay prisoner would very much like to correspond with anyone who is warm, sensitive, and understanding. To share friendship and possibly much more. Please reply with photo to: TIMMY DeFOREST #38838, Jefferson City, MO 65102. (17)

Gay Male seeks interesting correspondents, also chess by mail. Send stamped envelope please. Will answer all. RAYMOND THOMPSON, 850 Bryant St., Rm. 700, San Francisco, CA 94103. (17)

Federal prisoner currently at the Denver County Jail. Due to be released in one year or less, would like to hear from anyone. Will answer all letters. CHRIS THORP, 6-E10, P.O. Box 1108, Denver, CO 80201 (17)

Devoted young man would like to hear from anyone who cares about someone who has no one. Would like to learn and grow with other gay males. Thanks... KENNETH de von PORTER, P.O. Box 41, #14691, Michigan City, IN 46360 (17)

In need of a friend, please write! Smiles... WILLIAM BOATWRIGHT, #78A-3364, Box 367, Dannemora, NY 12929 (17)

Masculine Gay male, seeks fem-gay male in the Boston area for friendship and possible relationship. TONY BROBST #146673 P.O. Box 69, P.O. Box 69, London, OH 43140. (17)

I am a lonely prisoner and very much in need of letters from understanding people. I enjoy sports, music, and melow evenings. Plsces. Write soon! WILLIAM HAMMONS #90703 Box 97, McAlester, OK 74501 (17)

Bi-sexual male looking for a lasting relationship and needs friends. Will answer all letters! W.G. HORTON #33700 P.O. Box 221 63-105, P.O. Box 221, Ralford, FL 32083. (17)

I'm young and lonely seeking correspondence for the purpose of establishing a friendship. RUSSELL HOLLIES 76230 Camp A-2/D Angola, LA 70712 (17)

Gay male is lonely for outside people. I have been in here for 3½ yrs. Write soon, in gay love, JIM N. CLEVERLY #15550, Box 14 Boise, ID 83707 (17)

Do not receive much mail from the outside, would like to correspond with anyone who cares. J.D. PARRISH Box A-55482- M-3 GA State Prison, Reidsville, GA 30499 (17)

Lonely male seeks your letters and friendship. MICHAEL MORGAN #147-338, P.O. Box 69, London, OH 43140. (17)

I am young and in prison! Would like to correspond with any sincere people. CHARLES F. GANNON, Box 607, Carson City, Nev. 89701 (17)

I will write to anyone! Please write. FRANCIS E. SULLIVAN JR., #063128, P.O. Box 1100-1331, Avon Park, FL 33825 (17)

I would like to receive mail from any people who care to write to me, gay or straight. HOMER BROOKS, #051094, P.O. Box 110-1591, Avon Park, FL 33825 (17)

I am from the West Indies, have no family in the US, so please write to me, I am lonely! TERRENCE S. CHARLES, P.O. Box C-16636, San Quentin, Tamal, CA 94964 (17)

I seek to establish a meaningful relationship with an open minded person. Will answer all letters! NAJRE S. NEKO, #90108, P.O. Box 97, McAlester, OK 74501 (17)

I am an inmate in a prison here in Michigan City, Ind. I will answer all letters! VERNON BLUITT, #11488, P.O. Box 41, Michigan City, IN, 46360 (17)

I would like to receive mail from anyone who would like to write to me. DONNIE TOOTLE Box D-21009- M-3, GA State Prison, Reidsville, GA 30499 (17)

Gay male looking for a sincere lasting relationship with someone who cares! Will be leaving prison, Jan. 1981. D.E. HART A-73633 Box 87, Menard, IL 62259 I came across your address in *Gay Sunshine*. I'm in a deep south, plantation-type, redneck prison. We pick cotton all day in the fields and you've no idea how good it is to come in from a hard day's work and find a letter. Gay SPELTS, 296628, Rt. 2, Box 1200, Ramsey II, Rosharon, TX 77583. (16)

I've been meaning to write you for some time now but for lack of funds for stamps I'm just now getting around to it. I admit my handwriting isn't all that grand but I sure could use somebody company, even if it's in writing. I feel I'm in touch with my emotions and would like someone to help me move up in the world mentally. Danny MEYERS, Box 779 #158078, Marquette, MI 49855 (14)

Would you please help me ease some of this loneliness? Please write! ROBERT JONES, #4054, P.O. Box 41, Mich. City, IN 46360 (17)

Young man, lonely, and in need of correspondence. Will write to anyone who is interested. JACK ABRAMS, #156088, P.O. Box 69, London, OH 43140 (17)

I seek sincere correspondence and possibly lasting friendships. Only sincere gays please! JOHN WALLER, #99879, P.O. Box 97, McAlester, OK 74501 (17)

I seek a strong and lasting relationship. I will be released in June of 1981. Write: JOHNNY DENVER MCGOWAN, #98469, P.O. Box 97, McAlester, OK 74501 (17)

Calendar

weekly events

Boston, MA — Lindemann Center activities (Gay Recreational Activities Committee and Chiltern Mountain Club) have begun again. See listings for details.

sundays

Boston, MA — Boston Area Coalition for Cuban Aid and Resettlement (BACCAR) open meeting for potential sponsors of gay and lesbian Cuban refugees and also for other interested persons. Arlington St. Church. Every Sunday at 3pm. Info: 723-2997 (8-12pm).

Cambridge, MA — Closet Space, a weekly news, interviews and music program for lesbians and gay men. On WCAS, 740AM. 11am.

Boston, MA — Musically Speaking, women's programming. Music, ideas, announcements. Call Melanie at 494-8810 with events and comments. (WMBR-FM 88.1) Sundays 1-3pm.

Boston, MA — Gay AA meets at Old West Church, 131 Cambridge St. Gay men and women. 2:30pm

Boston, MA — Chiltern Running Club. Jogging and end racing on the Esplanade. Sundays at 1, Mon., Wed. & Fri. at 6. Info: 482-5285.

Boston, MA — Gay Recreational Activities Committee (GRAC). Swimming at Lindemann Center (Stanford St. Gov't. Ctr.). Men and women. 2-4pm.

Bedford, MA — Bedford-Concord Area Social Club meets at 7:30pm. Info: John 275-1336 or Joe 443-4775. All are invited.

Orleans, MA — Shoreline, a gay social group, alternative to the bars, on Cape Cod. Meets every 2nd Sunday. Info: P.O. Box 1614, Orleans, MA 02653.

Greenfield, MA — Gay Men of Franklin County. Every third Sun. Green River Cafe, Osgood St. 7pm.

Concord, NH — NH Coalition of Lesbians and Gay Men. First Sun. of the month. 1-5pm. Statewide political action group. Info: 228-8049.

New York, NY — Meeting of Gay and Lesbian Blind at the Gay and Lesbian Services Center. 110 E. 23rd St. Suite 502, 4-6pm. Info: Michael at 362-8729.

New York, NY — Rainbow Society. Deaf gay meeting. Manhattan Community Center, 75 Morton St. 2nd Sun. of the month. 2pm. 755-1426.

coming events

nov 9 sun

Boston, MA — Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians. Potluck supper and meeting. 7pm. Info: 236-4710.

10 mon

Somerville, MA — Women's Center Coffeehouse. 7:30-10:30pm. Entertainment for women every Mon. eve. at the Women's Center, 38 Union Sq. (above laundromat). Food and non-alcoholic refreshments. \$1 donation. Info: 623-9340. (Volunteers needed to help staff the Center, answer phones, giving referral info, etc. Info: 623-9340).

Worcester, MA — Frenz and Luvvers first monthly potluck of the season. All welcome. Info: 756-7938 between 8 & 9pm.

11 tues

Salem, MA — North Shore Gay Alliance. Exodus: a group building a place for the community to be. 17 Sutton Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: 745-6966.

12 wed

Boston, MA — General meeting of Mass Gay Political Caucus. 7:30pm. Info: 242-3544. All are welcome.

mondays

Cambridge, MA — Parents and Friends of Gays meet on the first Monday of the month. 7:15pm sharp at the Episcopal Theological Seminary Library, 99 Brattle St. Info: 542-5188 or write: PFOG, 40 Cogswell Ave., Cambridge, MA 02140.

Cambridge, MA — LUNA (Lesbians United for Non-nuclear Action) meeting. Women's Educ. Ctr., 46 Pleasant. 354-8807. 7-10pm.

Brattleboro, VT — Southern Vermont Gay Men meet every 4th Monday at the Common Ground, 25 Elliot St. 7:30pm.

Nashua, NH — Meeting of Nashua Area Gays. 8pm. Info: Paul 888-1305, or write: Nashua Area Gays, P.O. Box 3472, Nashua 03061.

New York, NY — Gay Overeaters Anonymous, for lesbians and gay men, meet at 7:30pm at Gracie Square Hosp. 420 E. 76th St.

New York, NY — Meeting of the NY Coalition of Black and Third World Lesbians and Gays. Triangle Ctr., 26 Ninth Ave., 3rd floor. 7:30pm. Anyone interested in these issues is welcome regardless of race.

tuesdays

New York, NY — WBAI (99.9FM). The Lesbian Show. 8:30pm. 279-0707.

Cambridge, MA — Friends Meeting at Cambridge. Draft counseling. Every Tuesday at 3:30 and 7:30pm. 5 Longfellow Park (near Harvard Sq.) Info: 876-6883.

Cambridge, MA — Daughters of Billitis. Organization for women. Discussion group. Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8pm. Call 661-3633 for info on all DOB activities.

New Bedford, MA — Rap group at the Ald Center. 18 S. Water St. 8-10pm. Info: 999-3141.

Uxbridge, MA — Support and Discussion Group for Lesbians. Eves, 7:30pm. Info: 278-5475.

New York, NY — Meeting of Politically Involved Lesbians and Gays Under Twenty-two (PIGLUT), 339 Lafayette St. (top floor). Info: Michael 236-2397. Open to all 21 and under.

Hartford, CT — Greater Hartford Lesbian and Gay Task Force meets at Hill Ctr., 350 Farmington Ave. 7pm (First Tues.) Info: 249-7691.

wednesdays

Boston, MA — Gay Youth Rap. Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY). For all between the ages of 14 and 22. 7-9pm. 128A Tremont St. (near Park St. stop), 4th floor. Info: BAGLY 338-9472 or the Hotline: 426-9371.

Boston, MA — Walk-In VD screening and treatment for and by gay men. 6:30-8pm. Fenway Community Health Center, 16 Haviland St. (near Auditorium stop). 287-7573.

13 thurs

Boston, MA — GCN VOLUNTEER PROOF-READING AND PASTEUR. SEE THURSDAYS ABOVE FOR DETAILS.

Boston, MA — Robin White and Ben Klein from the Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth will talk about growing up as a lesbian or gay youth. PBS, Channel 2, Tom Cottle Show. 8:30pm. (Repeat showing on Sun., Nov. 16 at 11:30pm).

Middlebury, VT — Gay Men's Self-affirmation Group. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: 388-6819 eves or 388-6752 days.

New York, NY — "Some of the Images Gay People Convey to Strangers." West Side Discussion Group, Greenwich House, 7th Ave. So. at Barrow St. 8:30pm. Social hour follows. \$2 don.

14 fri

Boston, MA — GCN VOLUNTEER NIGHT FOR SENDING OUT THE PAPER. SEE FRIDAYS ABOVE FOR DETAILS.

Boston, MA — Meet the Cubans: a night of entertainment and Cuban cuisine. Arlington St. Church, 355 Boylston St. 8-10pm. \$3 donation.

Boston, MA — Chiltern Mountain Club swimming is in trouble. Come to a meeting to help decide the future of the program. Lindemann Center (Gov't Ctr.) Pool, 7pm. Info: Joe 227-5363 or Ted 247-1206.

Storrs, CT — Gay Alliance at UConn is sponsoring a dance at the Puerto Rican Center. BYOB. 9pm-2am.

Boston, MA — Lesbian and Gay Media Advocates (LAGMA) meeting. 7:30-9:30pm. New members welcome. Our advocacy is growing. Join us. Cell 428-9371. (M-F, 6pm-midnight) for info.

Cambridge, MA — Second Wave magazine is opening its collective to new members. Interested women should come to Wed. eve meetings, 6:30pm, Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass Ave. or call Amy at 628-7275 (h) or 495-2560 (w).

Boston, MA — Gay Recreational Activities Committee (GRAC) volleyball (near Rose Garden in the Fenway). Men and women. 6:30-8:30pm.

Providence, RI — Transvestite/transsexual meetings. 8pm. Info: 272-9247.

New York, NY — "Oakdale, Indiana," a lesbian soap opera, Weds. on WBAI, 99.5FM, at 6:10 pm and at midnight.

New York, NY — WBAI, 99.5FM, Gay Rap. 279-0707. 8:30-9:30pm.

New York, NY — Gay Liberation Allows Drag (GLAD) meeting. 1835 First Ave. Info: 473-5886 x204. Ask for Eve.

New York, NY — Chelsea Gay Association meets last Wed. of the month. Coffeehouse. Info: 691-7950.

thursdays

Boston, MA — GCN proofreading and layout (basically cutting and peeling). No experience necessary. We'll teach you all you need to know! Proofreading begins 5-1sh and layout 6-1sh. 22 Bromfield St. (near Park St end Weehampton St subway stops), 2nd floor. 426-4469.

Boston, MA — North American Man Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). Regular meetings on 1st and 3rd Thurs. 8pm. Glad Day Bookshop, 22 Bromfield St. (near Park St.) Info: 542-0144.

Boston, MA — Lesbian Youth United (LYU). Rap group. 7:30-9:30pm. For women 22 and under who are or are considering being lesbians. 128A Tremont St. (4th floor). Call BAGLY (Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth) at 338-9472 or the Hotline 426-9371. (6pm-midnight).

Boston, MA — Lesbian and Gay Pride meeting for people interested in planning community events as part of the committee's year-round organizing work. Glad Day Book Shop, 22 Bromfield St. (near Park St.) 7:30pm sharpish!

Cambridge, MA — Daughters of Billitis. Organization for women. Discussions and social hour. Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass Ave. 8pm. Call 661-3633 for info on all DOB activities.

Hartford, CT — "Gay Spirit", news, commentary, interviews and music, on WWUH, 91.3FM. 8-9:30pm.

Northampton, MA — Pioneer Valley Gay People's Alliance is now forming. Meetings on first and third Thursdays at the Unitarian Society, 220 Main St. 7:30pm. Info: (413) 586-5979.

New York, NY — Black and White Men Together. Consciousness-raising session on racism. Info: Henry 873-5572 or Richard 431-4674.

15 sat

Cambridge, MA — Lesbian and Gay Folkdancing. Phillips Brooks House, Harvard Yard. 4-6pm followed by a potluck dinner. Info: Beth 666-4278 or Dee 661-7223.

Boston, MA — The Committee of Black Gay Men extends an invitation to an orientation meeting, the weekend of Nov. 15 and 16. The national leadership will make a presentation. FREE! Info: Ken 427-0962.

Boston, MA — Women's Square and Contradance to benefit A Woman's Place. Boston YWCA, 140 Clarendon St. 8-11:30pm. \$3 donation. Refreshments available, childcare provided, accessible to disabled (6 steps, assistance provided). Info: 492-3216.

Boston, MA — Chiltern Mt. Club. Potluck and pictures. Info: Mark (617) 363-5404.

Boston, MA — Women's Action Against Militarism. Speakouts, energy circle, music, expressions of defiance and reclaiming our power. Boston Common. 11am. Pick up leaflets and leave from the Common to go out to our communities to educate others about the violence on our streets and abroad and the connections between them.

Amherst, MA — Benefit disco at campus center aud. 9pm-2am. Non-alcoholic drinks available. Guest DJ. Donation \$2.

Boston, MA — Anti-draft Conference sponsored by the Boston Alliance Against Registration and the Draft. Info: 491-4694.

Cambridge, MA — Lesbian Liberation. A leaderless support group meeting every Thursday from 8-10pm. Newcomers welcome. Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 354-8807.

Cambridge, MA — Lesbians with children. Support group. 8-10pm. Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 354-8807.

Somerville, MA — Lesbian Support Group for younger women. Somerville Women's Center, 38 Union Square, (2nd floor over laundromat). 6pm. Info: 623-9340.

New York, NY — Biweekly gay male "S/M" support group. 8pm. Info: Brian 243-3332 (6-10pm).

New York, NY — General meeting of the Committee of Lesbian and Gay Male Socialists at NY Merxist School, 151 W 19th St. 7th floor. 7:30pm. Info: 988-3012.

New York, NY — Gay Activists Alliance regular meeting at 339 Lafayette St. (near Houston). 8:30pm. All are welcome!

fridays

Boston, MA — Come to GCN office, 22 Bromfield (near Park St. subway stop), 2nd floor, anytime after 5 for as long or as short as you like (until about 11pm) to help send the paper out to subscribers. (There are LOTS of them and we do need help!) Refreshments and good times. Men and women welcome. 426-4469.

Boston, MA — Chiltern basketball. 7-9pm. Lindemann Ctr. (near Gov't Ctr.), Stanford St. entrance. FREE! Info: Tony 236-1914.

Boston, MA — Chiltern swimming for men and women over 40 from 6-7pm. Swimming for men of all ages from 7-9pm. Lindemann Ctr. (near Gov't Ctr.) Info: Joe 227-5363.

Cambridge, MA — Daughters of Billitis. Over 35 rap group at Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8pm. (4th Friday end 2nd Wednesday of each month.)

Pittsfield, MA — Lesbians United meetings. Info: Women's Services Center, 499-2425.

New York, NY — Consciousness Raising on Racism, sponsored by Black and White Men Together (BWMT/NY). 7:30pm. Info: Henry at 873-5572 or 799-9432 or Richard at 431-4874.

saturdays

Boston, MA — Gay Youth. Outings and activities for lesbians and gay men 14-22. Organized by the Boston Alliance of Gay and Lesbian Youth (BAGLY). 128A Tremont St. (near Park St.), 4th floor. Info: BAGLY 338-9472 (Wed. & Thurs. eves) or Hotline 426-9371 (6-midnight).

Providence, RI — Gay Youth Group meets every other Saturday. Info: 272-9247.

New York, NY — Gay Youth Rap Group. Organized by end for gay youth. 1-4pm. 339 Lafayette St. (one block north of Houston), top floor. Open to all lesbian and gay youth 21 and under. Info: Mark 799-0388 or Michael 236-2397.

Cambridge, MA — "Issues of Gay Life": a conference sponsored by Exodus Center. Episcopal Divinity School, Washburn Hall, 99 Brattle St. Registration 9-10am. Conference 10-5:30pm. Workshop on Coming Out, We're All Getting Older, Legal Issues, Alcoholism and other topics.

16 sun

Boston, MA — Chiltern Mt. Club. Bike trip and potluck. Info: John (617) 275-1338.

Boston, MA — Boston Women's Marching Band. Fundraising potluck brunch. 11:30am-2pm. Info: Ellen 776-3388. Alcohol/drug free event for women.

Somerville, MA — Boston Women's Marching Band rehearsals every 1st and 3rd Sunday. 4:30-6:30pm. Somerville Women's Center, Union Square, Bow St. Info: 776-3388. All musicians are welcome, regardless of how long you've been playing.

Cambridge, MA — The Women's Committee Against Genocide presents "Bush Mame", a black woman's struggle in Watts. Old Cambridge Baptist, 1151 Mass Ave. 7:30pm. \$2.50 donation.

New York, NY — Black and White Men Together. General meeting. Info: 873-5572, 799-9432 or 757-3111.

17 mon

New York, NY — "Witches and Feggots — Dykes and Poofters," and "Farewell to Charms", a lesbian comedy short will be shown in Eisner-Lubin Aud., Loeb Student Ctr. 8pm. \$4 admission.

The deadline for Calendar items is Tuesday at noon for the following issue.